

# Che Statesman

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KOLKATA | **NEW DELHI** | SILIGURI | BHUBANESWAR

### MANY EVOLUTIONS FOR CENTENARIAN 'CITIZEN OF THE WORLD'



A GIANT AMONG MEN

PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION

BUMRAH NAMED CAPTAIN OF CRICKET AUSTRALIA'S TEST TEAM OF 2024

P12

SILVER 98,000

BRENT CRUDE (IN \$) 74.36 ▲ 0.37

The Statesman

SENSEX 78.139.01 ▼109.12

WISHES ITS READERS A HAPPY NEW YEAR

### **WEATHER**

SMOG/SHALLOW TO MODERATE FOG IS LIKELY IN THE MORNING. MAINLY CLEAR SKY. SMOG/SHALLOW TO MODERATE FOG IS LIKELY IN THE EVENING/NIGHT. THE MAXIMUM AND MINIMUM TEMPERATURES WOULD BE AROUND 18 AND 08 DEGREES **CELSIUS RESPECTIVELY.** 

### **RAINFALL: NIL RELATIVE HUMIDITY**

Max. 95 % Min. 61 % **TEMPERATURE** 

Max: 17.7 °C (-3) **SUN RISES** 07:14 hrs **MOON RISES** 09:16 hrs

Min:  $.09.6 \, ^{\circ}\text{C} \, (+3)$ **SUN SETS** 17:36 hrs **MOON SETS** 18:58 hrs

### **THUMBNAILS**



People gather at India Gate on the last day of 2024. ■ SUBRATA DUTTA

## Wearedetermined to work even harder in 2025: PM Modi

2024 was a year of progress, unity and steps towards a Vikshit Bharat: MyGovIndia

₹ vs \$ 85.65

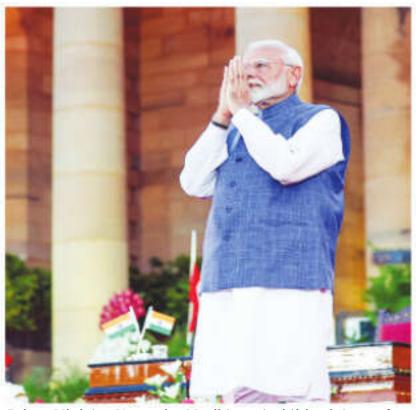
Responding to a video post by MyGovIndia on X, Mr Modi said: "Collective efforts and transformative outcomes! 2024 has been marked by many feats, which have been wonderfully summed up in this video. We are determined to work even harder in 2025 and realise our dream of a Viksit Bharat."

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STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI, 31 DECEMBER** 

rime Minister Narendra Modi Tuesday said the Union Government was determined to work even harder in 2025 and realise the dream of a Viksit Bharat.

Responding to a video post by MyGovIndia on X, Mr Modi said: "Collective efforts and transformative outcomes! 2024 has been marked by many feats, which have been wonderfully summed up in this video. We are determined toworkevenharderin 2025



Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted this picture of him taking oath as the Prime Minister of India for the

Viksit Bharat."

The video post mentioned the achievements of India in 2024 and the unforgettable moments that marked a year of progress, unity, and steps toward a Viksit Bharat.

Meanwhile, in a series of posts, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) reflected on 2024's memorable moments. Prime Minister and realise our dream of a Modi's recent international

visits have significantly strengthened India's global partnerships, enhancing strategic and economic cooperation and cultural ties across continents, the PMO said in a post on X.

India's active role in various global summits in 2024 highlights its commitment to promoting international cooperation and a sustainable, equitable world. The country is emerging as a



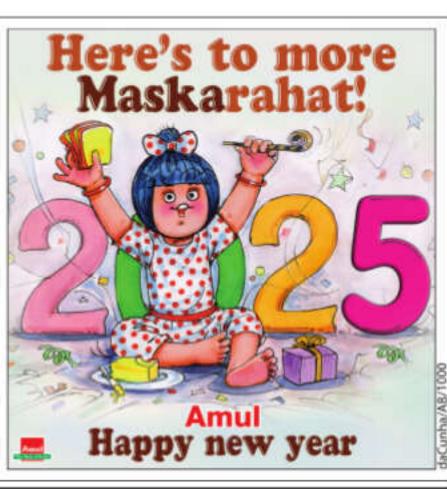
PM Modi cradles a baby in his arms after casting his vote in Ahmedabad. ■NARENDRA MODI/X

global economic leader with resilience and innovation. It has redefined governance, advanced social progress and led a digital transformation. These efforts are shaping a future of growth

GOLD 78,495.00

and opportunity for all. India is setting global standards in climate action with innovative policies, renewable energy leadership and initiatives like International Solar Alliance, Mission LiFE and Global Biofuels Alliance, paving the way for a sustainable and prosperous future. "Rising as a symbol of progress and resilience, India is earning global recognition for its economic progress, technological advancements and contributions to regional and global sta-

bility," the PMO said.



## Manipur CM apologises for ethnic violence, calls for unity in the year 2025

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE IMPHAL. 31 DECEMBER** 

Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh on Tuesday issued a heartfelt apology to the people of the state for the ethnic violence and unrest that erupted in May 2023 and continues to persist, leading to loss of hundreds of lives, widespread displacement, and prolonged ten-

Speaking at a public event, Mr Singh called the events since May 2023 "deeply unfortunate" and expressed profound regret over the suffering endured by the people.

"I feel regret, and I want to say sorry to the people of Manipur for what has been happening. Many people lost their lives and were rendered homeless. I really feel regret and apologise to all victims," the Chief Minister said.

"It is very unfortunate that many people have lost their loved ones, many people had to leave their homes and villages. However, considering the positive developments during the past three-four months, I hope peace and normalcy will return to the state in the New Year 2025," Singh said. Manipur has faced one of its most challenging years in recent history, with ethnic clashes breaking out between the Meitei and Kuki communities overlongstanding grievances related to land rights, Scheduled Tribe status,

and governance. The violence, which began in May 2023, has left over 200 dead, thousands injured, and tens of thousands displaced. Entire villages were burned, and internally displaced persons (IDPs) were forced into relief camps, enduring severe hardship. The unrest also highlighted deeper issues, including the state's fragile social fabric and challenges in governance. Despite a strong security presence, sporadic

violence has continued. In his appeal, the Chief Minister urged all communities to forgive and forget past grievances, emphasising unity among the state's diverse tribal and ethnic groups.

"Whatever happened, happened. Let's forgive and forget past mistakes and start a new life filled with peace and prosperity, with Manipur living harmoniously with all its recognised 34-35 tribes," Mr

Singh stated. "I appeal to all the communities to live together and to make Manipur prosperous with a united effort," the Chief Minister said. "On the eve of a New Year, I reflect on the progress we have made together in 2024 and the challenges we have to overcome. As we step into 2025, I reaffirm our commitment to building a stronger, more inclusive state." Giving details of incidents of the violence over the past 20 months, the Chief Minister said that so far around 200 people have been killed, around 12,247 FIRs were registered and 625 accused persons were arrested.

# 'Govt extending all assistance to Indian nurse on death row in Yemen'

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, 31 DECEMBER** 

The government on Tuesday confirmed that it is aware of the death sentence awarded to Nimisha Priya, an Indian nurse, in Yemen and said it is extending all possible assistance in the matter. In response to media

queries, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said: "We are aware of the sentencing of Ms. Nimisha Priya in Yemen. We understand that the family of Ms. Priya is exploring relevant options. The government is extending all possible help in the matter." Nimisha Priya, who has

been sentenced to death in Yemen, is a trained nurse and has worked in private hospitals in Yemen for a few years.

She was awarded a life sentence in 2020 after being convicted of killing Talal Abdo Mahdi, her business partner,



who she accused of fraud and abuse, in 2017.

Her husband and minor daughter returned to India in 2014 because of financial reasons and in the same year, Yemen was gripped by a civil war, and they could not go back as the country stopped issuing new visas.

Later in 2015, Ms Priya joined hands with Mahdi to set up her clinic in Yemen's capital city Sana. She sought Mahdi's support because, under Yemen's law, only citizens are allowed to set up

clinics and business firms. In 2015, Mahdi accompanied Ms Priya to Kerala when she came for a month-long holiday. During the visit, he stole a wedding photograph of Ms Priya, which he later manipulated to claim that he was married to her.

A plea moved by the mother of Ms Priya had stated, "After a while, Nimisha's clinic began, Mahdi manipulated the ownership documents of the clinic. He also began to take money out of her monthly earnings after telling everyone that Nimisha was his wife Nimisha had alleged that Mahdi had been harassing her and her family for years.

Mahdi also seized her passport. This was done to ensure that she would not leave Yemen. He tortured her under the influence of drugs. He threatened her at gunpoint several times. He took all the money from the clinic and her ornaments.

### **ADIEU 2024**



The setting sun marks the final evening of 2024 in New Delhi on Tuesday. 

Subrata Dutta

## Quad now a vital force for stability in Indo-Pacific: Jaishankar

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, 31 DECEMBER** 

In a social media post on 'X' marking the 20th anniversary of the Quad partnership, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Tuesday said the four-nation grouping now stands as a vital force for stability, progress and prosperity in the Indo-Pacif-

"Two decades ago, the idea of Quad began with a shared response to the Indian Ocean tsunami," he noted.

He also shared a joint statement issued by the foreign ministers of the four Quad nations (India, Australia, Japan and the United States) on the occasion of the grouping's 20th anniversary, reaffirming their commitment to addressing the region's needs together.

The joint statement said that 20 years ago, in response to the 2004 Indian Ocean



earthquake and tsunami, Australia, India, Japan, and the USA came together in service to the people of the region for the first time as the grouping now known as the Quad.

The tsunami was one of the worst disasters in history, claiming the lives of nearly a quarter million people and displacing 1.7 million across 14 countries. "Together our four countries contributed

over 40,000 emergency responders, working with other partners across the Indo-Pacific region to support millions of people affected by the catastrophe. We honour the memories of those no longer with us and recognize the survivors and the families of those who were lost." the statement said.

They said that their foundational commitment to humanitarian assistance and

disaster relief remains strong. "We continue to work sideby-side to prepare for and respond quickly and effectively to disasters across the region. In 2024, our four countries collectively supported disaster preparedness and life-saving relief efforts across the Indo-Pacific, and we continue to build on those efforts to identify new ways to respond rapidly to humanitarian crises and disasters."

The statement further noted that what began as an emergency response to a catastrophe has grown into a full-fledged partnership delivering positive outcomes for the people of the region. Quad countries now work together and with partners across the Indo-Pacific to address complex challenges, from fighting climate change, cancer, and pandemics, to bolstering quality infrastructure, maritime domain awareness, STEM education, counter-terrorism efforts, critical and emerging technologies, and cyber security.

"Since 2021, the Leaders of our four nations have met annually to drive the Quad's positive contributions across South Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific," it added. The Quad nations said

that as four partners, they share a vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific that is peaceful, stable, and prosperous, underpinned by effective regional institutions. "We reaffirm our unwavering support for ASEAN's centrality and unity as well as mainstreaming and implementation of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific. We respect Pacific-led regional architecture, foremost the Pacific Islands Forum. We are also steadfast in our support for the Indian Ocean Rim Association, the region's premier organisation," they added.

# CBDT extends deadline for taxpayers under Vivad Se Vishwas scheme to 31 Jan

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, 31 DECEMBER** 

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) extended the deadline for taxpayers participating in the Vivad Se Vishwas scheme to 31 January 2025. Initially, the deadline was set for 31 December 2024.

The CBDT stated that the extension allows taxpayers additional time to determine the amount payable as specified in column (3) of the relevant table in the scheme.

For taxpayers categorised as new appellants, the amount payable for disputed tax on 31 January 2025, is 100 per cent of the disputed amount, increasing to 110 per cent if paid on 1 February 2025.

Old appellants will face a charge of 110 per cent on 31 January 2025, which rises to 120 per cent the following

Regarding disputed interest,



penalties, or fees, new appellants are required to pay 25 per cent on 31 January 2025, increasing to 30 per cent on 1 February 2025.

For old appellants, the amounts are 30 per cent on 31 January 2025, and 35 per cent on 1 February 2025.

In case the appeal proceedings are made after 31 January 2020, they will be called new applicants and if done before 31 January 2020,

they will be categorised as old applicants. Union Finance Minister

Nirmala Sitharaman announced the Vivad Se Vishwas scheme, aimed at helping taxpayers resolve disputes with the income tax department.

The scheme enables taxpayers to settle their outstanding tax liabilities by paying the disputed amount along with a specified percentage.









# Capital

### **THUMBNAILS**



Schoolchildren throng India Gate on a chilly winter afternoon on New Year's Eve in the Capital.

3 Bangladeshi immigrants held in SW Delhi: In its efforts to crackdown on the illegal migrants, Delhi Police have apprehended three Bangladeshi immigrants .including a motherson duo, and another person who were living in South West Delhi, it said on Tuesday. **Deputy Commissioner of Police (South West)** Surendra Choudhary said, "The mother was residing for more than 20 years and the son came in 2020 due to the family's financial hardship. Both of them have been deported to Bangladesh through the Foreigners Registration Office." The breakthrough came on December 29, when acting on a tip off, Naim Khan was intercepted from Shastri Market and his mother was also detained subsequently from Katwaria Sarai in South West Delhi where they were residing, Choudhary mentioned. Also, the third migrant, Akhtar Seikh, a construction labourer was first apprehended in a case at Sarojini Nagar police station who later got bail and went into hiding after the verification process began. However, yesterday he was traced near Sarojini Nagar railway station. He told the police that he belongs to West Bengal but on being asked about documents, he was unable to show or prove any of his identity proof. On further interrogation he disclosed that he was born in Madarganj Kochaghata, Bangladesh and he came to West Bengal in 2004 by illegal means by land surreptitiously. There he married an Indian girl in 2012 and made a permanent residence in West Bengal, the DCP said.

LG accuses Atishi of playing cheap politics:



**Chief Minister** Atishi of playing politics after she wrote a letter to him claiming that the Religious Committee ordered the demolition of numerous religious structures

day accused

Atishi`s letter, the LG office said, "Neither are any temples, mosques, churches or any other place of worship being broken/demolished, nor has any file to this effect come. The CM is playing cheap politics to divert attention from her and her predecessor's failures." The LG has issued strict instructions to the Police to maintain extra vigil against forces who may indulge in deliberate vandalism for political benefits, it said. Saxena's instructions are being strictly followed, as was witnessed during the just gone Christmas celebrations which did not see any untoward incident, the LG office added.

all across the national capital. Responding to

4 injured in LPG cylinder blast at a factory in Northeast Delhi: Four people sustained injuries in a fire caused by an LPG cylinder explosion at a heater factory in Jagdamba Colony, North East Delhi, the Fire Department said on Tuesday. According to the Delhi Fire Services, a fire-related call was received from Jagdamba Colony, Shiv Vihar, regarding a blaze at the factory. In response, four fire tenders were dispatched to the site. The fire broke out following the explosion of an LPG cylinder in the factory, injuring four workers. The injured individuals were immediately rushed to Safdarjung Hospital, where they are currently undergoing treatment, the DFS added. The flames were extinguished, and debris was cleared. A search operation was also conducted to ensure no one was trapped. No additional injuries were reported after the operation's conclusion, DFS confirmed. The police have launched an investigation into the incident. The factory was reportedly engaged in manufacturing heaters.

## Kejriwal launches Pujari-Granthi Samman Yojana; takes dig at BJP



**STATESMAN NEW SERVICE NEW DELHI. 31 DECEMBER** 

AP convener Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday claimed that the BJP, despite governing 20

vears, did not honour 'pujaris' and 'granthis'. He asked the BJP to start doing the same rather than criticizing

him for introducing a scheme

states and ruling Gujarat for 30

for the religious men. Kejriwal announced the Pujari-Granthi Samman Yojana at Marghat Wale Baba Hanuman Mandir, near the ISBT Kashmiri Gate, where the AAP chief along with his wife Sunita Kejriwal, worshipped Lord Hanuman and registered temple priests.

Meanwhile, Delhi Chief Minister Atishi visited Gurdwara Sahib in Karol Bagh, registering Granthis as part of the Pujari Granthi Samman Yojna.

Sharing a few snippets from his visit to the Marghat Baba Temple to inaugurate the scheme, Kejriwal wrote on his X handle (formerly Twitter), "Today I visited Marghat Baba's temple (ISBT) and launched the Pujari Granthi Samman Yojana. Today is the birthday of Mahant ji here. I also

celebrated his birthday with him." On BJP's reaction to the said scheme, AAP national convener

expressed taking to social media saying, "Since the announcement of the 'Pujari-Granthi Samman Yojana', BJP leaders have been hurling abuses at me. My question to them is: will abusing me benefit the nation? Your party governs 20 states, including Gujarat,

where you've ruled for 30 years.

Why haven't you honored pujaris

and granthis there? Start now—

I've shown you the way."

On the other hand, Atishi claimed that the granthis in the Gurudwara Sahib mentioned that it is the first government to think about them since Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Speaking at the registration event, CM said that this day marks the beginning of registrations under this scheme, and as the Pujaris and granthis remain with people through life's joys and sorrows, it is the government's duty to care for them. She said, "When the AAP government is re-elected in Delhi, every pujari and granthi will receive Rs 18,000 as a monthly honorarium.'

AAP's convener for Delhi Gopal Rai, visited temple pujaris in Vijay Park, and said, "Delhi is the first state where Arvind Kejriwal has announced a Pujari-Granthi Samman Yojana'. He added that this move reflects months of deliberation and fulfills longstanding aspirations.

## BJP slams move, dubs Kejriwal'anti-Hindu'

**STATESMAN NEW SERVICE NEW DELHI, 31 DECEMBER** 

The BJP on Tuesday slammed former Delhi Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief Arvind Kejriwal for launching the 'Pujari-Granthi Samman Yojana' and dubbed Arvind Keiriwal "anti-Hindu".

Kejriwal announced the launch of the 'Pujari-Granthi Samman Yojana' on Monday. Under this initiative, temple priests and gurdwara granthis in Delhi will receive a monthly honorarium of Rs 18,000 if AAP is voted back to power.

Reacting to the AAP chief's announcement, BJP national spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia said, "Anti-Hindu Kejriwal is now making new promises ahead of the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections. Why is it happening? It is because Kejriwal knows that the false promises he has made have not been fulfilled and, his career is going to get over. That is why he is coming up with more fake promises." Addressing a press conference at the BJP headquarters here, Bhatia said, "Today, when he (Arvind Kejriwal) promises to give Rs 18,000 to pujaris and granthis, a question arises in my mind that it has not been long since AAP was in love with liquor mafias and was giving them contracts to open shops outside temples and gurdwaras. Kejriwal allowed liquor shops to open outside all the places that we consider auspicious.'

"Kejriwal is anti-development. He must learn from the BJP. We



give our report card to people in the state that is going to hold assembly elections. He cannot even answer journalists," the BJP leader added.

Bhatia further said, "The Aam Aadmi Party has indulged in cheap politics by exploiting Delhi's children for political gains. This is utterly reprehensible."

The BJP leader said that on December 30, 2024, the National **Human Rights Commission** (NHRC) issued an order stating that AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal and Delhi Chief Minister Atishi used videos of innocent children and dragged them into politics.

"This is an absolute violation of the Juvenile Justice Act," Bhatia said. The BJP national spokesperson said the NHRC noted that the X post by Delhi CM Atishi and AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal had shared a video showing children directly involved in political activities for the party.

The commission has asked them to remove the video, but Kejriwal hasn't complied yet, Bhatia added.

# AAP govt failed in Delhi, didn't provide benefits of welfare schemes to people: Sehrawat



**STATESMAN NEW SERVICE NEW DELHI, 31 DECEMBER** 

BJP MP from West Delhi, Kamaljeet Sehrawat on Tuesday hit-out at the AAP Government and highlighted the alleged failures of the ruling dispensation across the assembly segments, which are part of her parliamentary constituency.

Sehrawat, while addressing a press conference at West Delhi District Office, issued a charge sheet against the state government, where she flagged its alleged false promises to the people in the area during the past 10 years.

She accused the Delhi government of not being able to issue ration cards, stating that a total of 156800 such cards were to be made in her parliamentary constituency, but till 2015 68000 were made, while she questioned as to why the AAP government kept people away from centre's schemes.

Sehrawat also alleged that Kejriwal had claimed to bring up 11000 new buses, 500 schools and 20 universities in Delhi, but did not deliver on this promise.

**Delhi Congress chief welcomes several** 

The BJP MP accused the

the condition of Raotula Rao, Indira Gandhi Hospital and other hospitals is so bad in the area, that if a serious patient arrives, he or she has to go to Deendayal Upadhyay Hospital. Sehrawat also pointed out the alleged delay in clearing the "garbage mountains," noting that instead of improving waste management, Delhi has become more polluted.

AAP government of not giving

farmers their due status, and

alleged that it was biased

She further alleged that

towards them.

She also pointed out at the alleged failures of Delhi Jal Board, claiming that areas like Balbir Nagar and Dwarka are experiencing sewage water entering households.

The MP also accused the AAP government of allegedly misusing Rs 80 crore under the guise of cleanliness, particularly in the Najafgarh

She urged the Delhi government to sign the MoU for implementing the Ayushman Bharat scheme across the state by January 5, blaming Kejriwal for depriving Delhi residents of free healthcare under this initiative.

### Social activist Vinod Garg joins AAP ahead of Delhi assembly polls

**STATESMAN NEW SERVICE NEW DELHI, 31 DECEMBER** 

Social activist Vinod Garg joined the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Tuesday in the presence of Rajinder Nagar MLA Durgesh Pathak at the party headquarters here.

The son of renowned social worker Dulichand Garg, who has been distributing blankets and food to the downtrodden and organising wedding ceremonies for their daughters was welcomed by Durgesh Pathak into the party fold offering his party cap and patka symboliing its membership. Vinod is involved in social work in the footsteps of his father.

Speaking on the occasion, Pathak called Vinod Garg an esteemed social worker from the Rajinder Nagar constituency, who has devoted his entire life to serving society. "Not just him, but his entire family carries a significant legacy of service. His father, Dulichand Garg, has an extraordinary history of

working for the people," he said. "I feel very fortunate that such a dedicated and service-oriented person has joined us," he added. Expressing gratitude to the AAP for welcoming him into its fold, Vinod Garg said, "I am honoured to join the AAP and through my NGO, I have always tried to help the poor in any way I can. When I met Durgesh Pathak, I was very happy. I have been inspired by Arvind Kejriwal's work and have supported the party since 2013. I will continue to serve the people through this platform."

### 7 booked for using forged papers to register as new voters, ERO calls for action against more fraudsters

**STATESMAN NEW SERVICE NEW DELHI, 31 DECEMBER** 

Delhi Police have registered an FIR against seven people for using forged electricity bill to register for new voter ID in Narela constituency while the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) of Matiala assembly constituency Tuesday wrote to Station House Officer (SHO) of Bindapur and Dwarka Sector 17 for lodging FIRs against six people for using forged documents to register as new voters in South West Delhi.

The FIR mentioned the names of seven individuals and was registered under Section 318 (cheating) of BNS at Narela Industrial Area police station in Outer North Delhi.

Meanwhile, in a letter addressed to the SHOs, SDM Kapashera Shelly wrote, six applicants, all residents of Matiala assembly constituency have tried to deceive the authorities by tempering the Aadhar card which was used as a proof of residence in their application.

Therefore, it is directed

**Earlier on Monday, Delhi Police had arrest**ed six individuals for their alleged involvement in a voter ID fraud case in Shaheen **Bagh area of South East Delhi. The accused** were found to have forged Aadhaar cards and electricity bills to create or modify voter ID cards.

that an FIR be lodged against the applicants and the police investigate the matter to determine the extent of their involvement in the offence and take necessary actions to prevent such fraudulent activities in the future, it added.

Earlier on Monday, Delhi Police had arrested six individuals for their alleged involvement in a voter ID fraud case in Shaheen Bagh area of South East Delhi.

The accused were found to have forged Aadhaar cards and electricity bills to create or modify voter ID cards.

## AAP leaders, workers into party fold

**STATESMAN NEW SERVICE NEW DELHI. 31 DECEMBER** 

Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee President Devender Yadav, on Tuesday, welcomed several AAP leaders into party fold ahead of the Delhi legislative assembly elections.

Those who joined Congress today include Sarbjit Singh, the AAP joint secretary from the Badli assembly constituency, Farid Shah, its star campaigner for the last assembly elections, former AAP councilors from the Mustafabad assembly constituency, Parveen and Mohd Maroof, BSP candidate for the 2020 elections MCD polls, and Rajni Suryavanshi, along with a large number of workers.

Their formal induction into the party took place on Tuesday at the DPCC office in New Delhi where Yadav presented them with party scarves.

Speaking on the occasion, the Congress state unit chief said with the support and cooperation of all those who joined the party, Congress



'The doors of Congress were always open to those who believed in the programmes and policies of the party'

government in the upcoming legislative assembly polls.

Taking a dig at the AAP, he said the leaders, ministers, MLAs, disillusioned with the corruption and authoritarian attitude of Kejriwal, leaders, councillors, and others were deserting the party, which would gain strength and prache described as a 'sinking tice creative politics to bring ship' heading for a total rout the grand old party back into in the upcoming polls.

The Congress leader said the leaders and workers of the AAP and the BJP were influenced by the democratic functioning of his party under the dynamic leadership of Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi fighting to protect the Constitution, uphold democracy. He said the doors of Congress were always open to those who believed in the programmes and policies of the party.

Former MP Udit Raj, AICC secretary in-charge of Delhi Danish Abrar, former Delhi Minister Narendra Nath and other party leaders were also present on the occasion.

### Bansuri asks Kejriwal to implement all promised schemes before polls

**STATESMAN NEW SERVICE NEW DELHI. 31 DECEMBER** 

BJP MP Bansuri Swaraj on Tuesday slammed Aam Aadmi Party chief Arvind Kejriwal over his party's "Pujari Granthi Samman Yojna" calling it an appeasement move ahead of the Delhi legislative assembly elections.

She hit-out at the AAP government claiming that it has not paid salaries to the Imams need for the AAP to wait for and Maulvis in Delhi for the past 17 months, while accused the party's national convener of beginning a new kind of appeasement politics by announcing honorarium for the Temple priests and Gurudwara granthis. Swaraj, while addressing a press conference and granthis, nor respected here, challenged the AAP chief to implement all the schemes that there was no Model Code

announced by him which also include the Sanjeevani and Mahila Samman Yojna, stating



the elections, when they already have their government in Delhi, and can implement the schemes

The BJP leader alleged that despite being in power for a decade the AAP government never honoured the priests the religious places, but now, Kejriwal is viewing them through the aspect of vote bank politics, and giving them false assurances in the name of such schemes.

She also questioned why of Conduct in place as of now. the pujaris and the granthis She said why was there a were left out till now, while

earlier the scheme was already brought in place for the Imams and Maulvis at mosques.

Swaraj further asked the AAP chief as to why have the Christian priests been completely left out in this regard.

The BJP leader also raised several questions with regard to the overall state of affairs and alleged misgovernance in the city under AAP's regime which had led people to face problems related to basic services like roads, drainage, sewers, water supply and health, which fall under the AAP government.

### Delhi Police embrace new criminal laws

**AGRAJ PRATAP SINGH & RAHUL GAHLAWAT** 

**NEW DELHI, 31 DECEMBER** 

The passing year was a transformative one for the Delhi police as it embraced the new criminal laws ~ Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) replaced the Indian Penal Code (IPC), Bharatiya Nagarika Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) replaced Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) and Bharatiya Sakshya Bill (BSB) replaced Indian Evidence Act (IEA).

The year 2014 also witnessed several incidents that shook people, including the killing of a businessman while he was on a morning walk in east Delhi, the firing at the GTB hospital where miscreants entered the hospital ward and shot a person due to mistaken identity.

Even the incident at an east Delhi child care centre which claimed lives of newborns was a result of criminal negligence, while the three civil services aspirants who died of drowning in a study centre's basement in the



month of July.

However, the city also witnessed a little decrease in cases of crime against women, owing to a comprehensive set of measures initiated by the Delhi Police through a combination of technology and conventional methods.

According to police data from January 1 to November 30, the cases of rape in the city declined by 10.36 per cent, from 2,141 cases in 2023 to 1,919 this year. Molestation cases also witnessed a drop by 19.10 per cent, that is from 2,345 in 2023 to 1,897 this year.

Additionally, eve-teasing cases decreased by 9.97 percent, from 381 in 2023 to 343

this year. Most notably, human trafficking cases plummeted by 42.37 per cent, from 59 in 2023 to just 34 this year.

With the Delhi legislative assembly polls round the corner, the police have intensified efforts against illegal voters, and also deported illegally residing Bangladeshi immigrants.

There has been a rise in cyber crime during the past year. Delhi police has been making people aware through various ways with regard to the ways cyber fraudsters approach gullible people.

Meanwhile, this year also witnessed a series of hoax bomb threats that haunted the authorities, a problem

which still persists. On May 3, such threats were received by around 200 schools and institutions in the capital city. Many city hospitals and airports were also targeted in a

During this period, questions were also raised about the functioning of the Delhi police. In the crackdown against the menace of drugs, the police on October 2 made one of the biggest drug hauls with the seizure of over 560 kilograms of cocaine estimated to be worth around Rs 2,000 crore from a warehouse in Mehrauli, South Delhi.

similar fashion.

Additionally, on October 18, around 200 kg of cocaine that belonged to the same syndicate was also seized from an unused shop in | in the camp include Public Ramesh Nagar area of west Delhi.

Following this, a comprehensive operation against the drug peddlers was initiated on instructions from LG that continued till the end of the year, resulting in the arrest of several peddlers and seizure of drugs.

## on January 4

**STATESMAN NEW SERVICE** NEW DELHI. 31 DECEMBER

NDMC to host

'Suvidha Camp'

The New Delhi Municipal Council announced on Tuesday that it will organise its next 'Suvidha Camp' on January 4 to provide information, facilitation, and grievance redressal services for its stakeholders.

The Suvidha Camp will take place from 10:30 an to 12:30 pm. The civic body stated that helpdesks from various departments will facilitate and address grievances for service users, employees, Resident Welfare Associations, Market Traders' Associations, and residents.

Departments participating

Health, Architecture and Environment, Commercial, Health Licensing, Property Tax, Education,

Accounts/Finance/Pension, Medical Services, Parking Management, Chief Security Office, EBR Department, Municipal Housing, Vigilance, and Library.

epaper.thestatesman.com

# India/Capital

### **THUMBNAILS**



A child with his father on a cold winter afternoon at India Gate on Tuesday. SUBRATA DUTT

SJVN signs MoU with Bihar govt for 1,000 MW Hathidah Durgawati PSP: SJVN has signed an MoU with the Bihar government for the development of the 1,000 MW Hathidah Durgawati Pumped Storage Project and other PSPs in Patna. A spokesperson for SJVN said here on Tuesday that Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Kumar Sinha, Minister of Energy and Planning Development Department Bijendra Prasad Yadav, Minister of Industries and Tourism Nitish Mishra, and SJVN Chairman and Managing Director Raj Kumar Choudhary, along with other senior officers of SJVN, were present during the signing of the MoU. The MoU was signed by SJVN BDE General Manager Mukesh Kumar Sharma and Bihar government's Department of Industries Secretary Bandana Preyasi. The development of PSPs in Bihar will create direct and indirect employment for 5,000 persons and an investment of about Rs 10,000 crore, the spokesperson said.

5th edition of Sant Shiromani Surdas Mahotsav hosted: The Geetanjali International Foundation presented the 5th edition of the Sant Shiromani Surdas Mahotsav at India International Centre, New Delhi. This celebration paid tribute to the 16th-century Bhakti poet Sant Surdas, blending Indian classical dance and music to showcase the spiritual and artistic heritage of the revered saint. The Surdas Mahotsav was inaugurated by Laxmi Narayan Chaudhary, Cabinet Minister of the Uttar Pradesh Government. Mr Chaudhary said, "The Sant Shiromani Surdas Mahotsav is a testament to our rich spiritual and cultural legacy. Sant Surdas's timeless poetry reminds us of the profound devotion and love for Lord Krishna that continues to resonate across generations. Events like these not only preserve our traditions but also inspire younger generations to embrace the essence of Bhakti and art."

# Punjab implements citizen-centric approach to deliver govt services

Patwaris, Sarpanches, Nambardars and MCs empowered to verify applications online, says Minister Aman

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE** CHANDIGARH, 31 DECEMBER

o ensure efficient, honest, accountable and citizen-centric governance to the people of the state, Punjab Government has taken slew of ground-breaking initiatives to make the government services more accessible for every citizen and transform Punjab into a truly digitally empowered society.

Highlighting the details about the initiatives launched by the state government, Punjab Governance Reforms and Public Caste (SC, BC/OBC) certificate, launched a pioneering project that has enabled Sarpanchs, tificates–Residence certificate, visits to obtain signatures from these 43 services, he said while spot in these camps. The primary been delivered digitally.



Grievances Minister Aman Arora Income certificate, EWS certificertificate.

WhatsApp and can provide their preferred time. recommendation through WhatsApp.

Department has also onboarded all the Patwaris to verify docuacross the state, he added.

Allowing people to access

Seva Sahayaks are adhered

to the scheduled appointments, services pendency touched 0.3 The Governance Reforms visiting citizens' locations to facilitate service applications through tablets and collect necments online, and as of now, essary documents (if required). over 9.20 lakh applications have Certificates are being sent directly been processed online by the totheir phones via SMS or What-Patwaris in the last seven months sApp. Over 1,11,915 appoint- pendency of citizen services. ments have been served.

their homes, Aman Arora said Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann that Punjab Government also launched the "AAP Di Punjab Government has started launched "Bhagwant Mann Sarkar, AAP De Dwar" scheme said that Punjab has recently cate, Old Age Pension and Dogra Sarkar-Tuhade Dwar" scheme on February 6, 2024, wherein to provide 43 citizen-centric camps are being organised across Punjab takes the lead by services to the people at their the state. As many as 11,090 Nambardars and Municipal launching this innovative ini- doorstep. Citizens can book an camps have been organised so Councillors (MCs) to verify applitiative aims to save citizens from appointment by just calling the far, wherein, as many as 50,046 cations online for various certhe hassle of making multiple helpline number 1076 to avail grievances were resolved on the

Sarpanchs, Nambardars and adding that citizens can conve-purpose of the scheme is to MCs. These local representatives niently schedule Doorstep Service facilitate people by providing will receive information via Delivery appointments at their services and resolution of grievances on the spot at the camps.

He further informed that the per cent in month of this December, which is the lowest ever recorded pendency. Regular monitoring of pendency of Citizen Services is being ensured to accomplish the goal of zero

Now, the people of Punjab The Governance Reforms do not need to visit any office services from the comfort of Minister further said that Chief or Sewa Kendra for collection of hard copies of certificates as delivery of digitally signed and QR coded certificates to citizens via SMS and email. These certificates are verifiable online and all the offices will accept the certificate. As on date, over 55,83,656 lakh documents have Mayor's New Year feastawasteful expenditure, says Raja Iqbal Singh



**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE** 

**NEW DELHI, 31 DECEMBER** 

The Leader of the Opposition in the Municipal Corporation of Delhi and former Mayor, Sardar Raja Iqbal Singh, on Tuesday criticised the New Year feast organised by the Mayor, calling it a wasteful expenditure and an act of insensitivity.

He alleged that the civic body owes crores in unpaid salaries and arrears to its employees, yet it is spending lakhs on a lunch party, which reflects the Mayor's insensitivity. He added that while the people of Delhi are suffering from increasing pollution and broken roads, AAP leaders seem more focused on hosting feasts.

Furthermore, Singh claimed that the MCD is grappling with a financial crisis, yet the Mayor continues to host lavish events, with the common people bearing the

Highlighting the shortcomings of the civic body, Singh lamented that while garbage piles are scattered across the city, roads are in poor condition, and the recent rains have exposed the government's preparations, the Mayor is busy hosting a feast that reflects his audacity and indifference.

### Amidurinal fee for men row, Shimla corporation withdraws decision

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE** 

Amid row over urinal fee for men in public toilets, the Shimla Municipal Corporation (SMC), revoked its decision.

The civic body's decision met with criticism after it was taken by it to charge Rs five from men using public urinals across the city. This backlash from the public and political circles left the civic body embarrassed and SMC Mayor Surinder Chauhan had to clarify in a media briefing on Tuesday that there would be no urinal charges for men.

He further stated that there is no intention to impose any urinal fee for men in near future. Chauhan clarified that the maintenance of the public toilets in Shimla was being managed by Sulab International for which the corporation was providing Rs 2.44 lakh per month for the services.

### Farmers for MSP: SC grants time to Punjab to shift Dallewal to hospital

### **PARMOD KUMAR**

NEW DELHI, 31 DECEMBER

The Supreme Court on Wednesday granted the Punjab government time until January 2, 2025, to comply with its December 20 order to provide medical aid and shift farmers' leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal, who has been on a 'fast-untodeath' since November 26, to a hospital. Dallewal is on fast in support of agitating farmers' demands, which include legally guaranteed minimum support prices for agricultural pro-

bench of Justice Surva Kant wal. and Justice Sudhanshu Dhulia on January 2, 2025, after Punjab's Advocate General Gur- were made by mobilising



time for the compliance of the December 20 order.

Advocate General Gurminder Singh said an application has been filed seeking an additional three days to comply with the court's December 20 Granting more time to the order to provide medical aid

The Advocate General furposted the matter for hearing ther said that efforts to comply with the December 20 order

at the protest site at the Khanauri border. However, due to the Punjab Bandh organised Secretary and DGP of Punjab by farmers' organisations on Monday, there were traffic blockades and other hin-

The Advocate General Punjab government, a vacation and hospitalisation for Dalle-informed the bench about the a 'fast-unto-death' at the protesters' proposal that Dallewal would accept medical aid if the Centre was ready to talk to them.

the farmers have proposed to the central government that if they are invited for talks, then Dallewal is ready to receive medical aid as desired," the Advocate General said. The bench then posted the

contempt petition filed against the Punjab Chief Secretary and Director General of Police to January 2, 2025, for further hearing.

The top court said the Chief will have to appear virtually on the next date of hearing. Dallewal, the convener of

the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political), has been on Khanauri border to pressure the Centre into accepting the farmers' demands, that include a legal guarantee of minimum "As per the negotiators, support price (MSP) for crops.

# BJP MLAs stage sit-in protest over pending CAG reports

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, 31 DECEMBER** 

Delhi BJP MLAs under the leadership of Leader of Opposition in Assembly Vijender Gupta on Tuesday staged a sit-in protest at Assembly Speaker Ram Niwas Goel's office, demanding a special session of the Assembly to present the 14 Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG)

in the Assembly without further reports from the public."



During the sit-in, the oppofrom all sides. This delay sition MLAs handed over a appears to be a desperate to be tabled in the Assembly. memorandum to the Speaker, attempt to complete its tenure Failure to do so not only insisting he direct the gov- and conceal the corruption violates the constitutional ernment to table the reports of the AAP hidden in these rights of the Assembly members

Attacking the Aam Aadmi islative party had submitted Party (AAP) government, Gupta a memorandum on 19th being utilized," Gupta said. said, "The government has December over the matter, crossed all limits of shame- he said, "Today, the Opposition asserted that the extensive lessness by deliberately delaying submitted another memo- delay in presenting these the presentation of the 14 randum requesting the Speaker reports raises serious doubts CAG reports in the Assembly to call a special session of the about the government's intent.

Assembly. The memorandum underlined that the CAG regularly audits government departments to ensure transparency, accountability, and an assessment of financial and administrative practices." "Performing its duty, the

CAG submitted audit reports of various government departments for 2017-18 to 2021-22 to the government. But, these reports have been penddespite mounting pressure ing with the government for the past two years and are yet but also undermines public Informing that the BJP leg-trust, as citizens have the right to know how public funds are

The Leader of Opposition

### Haryana sets one-year target to eliminate TB **by Dec 2025**

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE** CHANDIGARH, 31 DECEMBER

Haryana Health Minister Kumari Arti Singh Rao has said that the campaign to eliminate TB from the state will run till March 25, 2025, and the target has been set to eliminate TB in one year by December 2025.

The Minister called upon the people to cooperate in the TB Eradication Campaign.

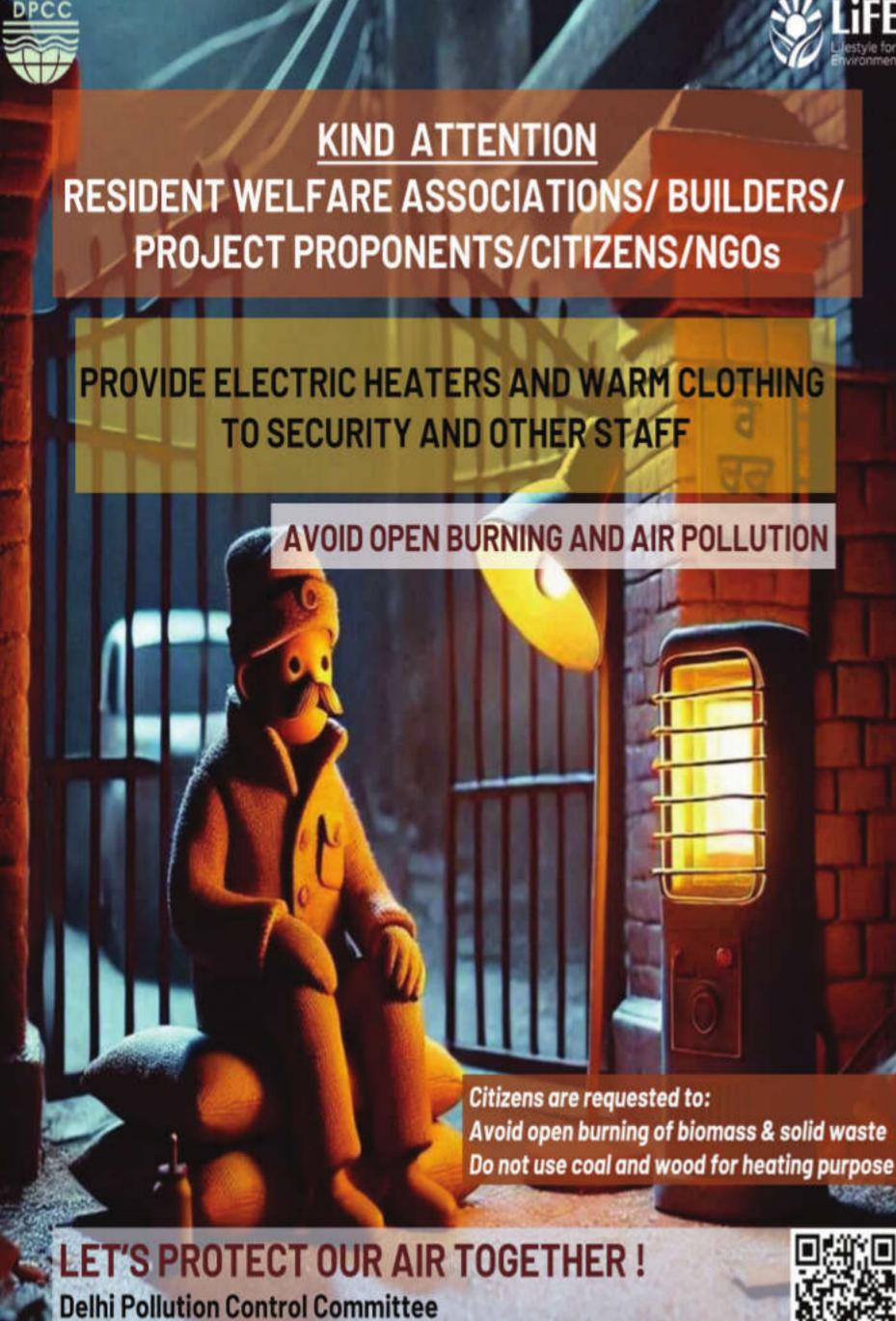
She said that the 100-day TB Mukt Campaign has been launched at the state level from December 7, 2024. She said that the present state government has set a target to eliminate TB from the state by December 2025.

The Minister informed that during this campaign, the team of the Health Department is identifying TB patients by going to every city and village in every district. In this, the patients diagnosed with TB are being provided tests and medicines free of cost under the government scheme.

The Health Minister said that the Department is making dedicated efforts to realize Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini's vision of TB-Mukt Haryana. She said that the medical officers of the state should not consider this campaign as just a duty but should work with full commitment.

She informed that under the Nikshay Poshan Yojana, the government also gives an incentive amount of Rs 1000 per month to TB patients till the treatment is over. Kumari Arti Singh Rao said that under this campaign, doctors should also encourage citizens to become Nikshay Mitra and give them information about the Nikshay portal.

The Health Minister has also appealed to the citizens of the state to come forward for health checkups under the TB-free campaign being run across the state. She said that the initial symptom of TB is cough. Coughing for more than two weeks, frequent sweating, fatigue, weight loss, difficulty in breathing, and fever are the main symptoms of TB.



### Year ends on cold note; IMD predicts colder and foggy start to New Year

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, 31 DECEMBER** 

On the last day of the year, Delhi recorded the minimum temperature at 9.6 degrees Celsius while the weather department forecast cold and dense fog for the first day of the New Year.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) stated that the minimum temperature recorded at Palam stood at 8.3 degrees Celsius while the maximum temperature was recorded at 14.9 degrees Celsius at the same station.

Meanwhile, the fog and cold wave conditions are likely to continue over parts of northwest India during the next 24 hours which will improve thereafter as a wet spell is



A view of Raisina Hills against the backdrop of the last sunset of 2024 on New Year's Eve in New Delhi on Tuesday.

likely over Western Himalayan Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, meters at Palam airport at 7 Region during next one week Himachal Pradesh, South of am. and over plains of northwest Uttarakhand, Haryana and region on January 4 to 6, it Delhi among others. As per at Connaught Place were seen A satellite image shared by the minimum visibility at Safenjoying the passing year with the weather department at darjung was recorded 1000 enthusiasm and warmth

On New Year's eve, people the meteorological department, in layers of woolen clothes 9:45 am showcased fog over meters at 5:30 am while 1500 despite the cold evening.





https://dpcc.delhigovt.nic.in







### **THUMBNAILS**

K'taka cylinder blast: The death toll in the cylinder blast tragedy in Karnataka's Hubballi rose to eight as another victim succumbed to burn injuries on Tuesday morning. The victim has been identified as 42-year-old Prakash Barakera, a resident of Unakal in Hubballi. Treatment was ongoing for another young Ayyappa devotee, Vinayaka, at the Karnataka Institute of Medical Sciences (KIMS) in Hubballi. The seventh victim, 27-year-old Tejeshwar Saatare, a resident of Ramanagar, succumbed to his injuries on Monday night. Prakash Barakera`s inconsolable two sisters stated that God had betrayed them by taking away their brother, who was like a father figure to them. "He had been going on the Sabarimala pilgrimage for 15 years. We spoke to him early in the morning, and we thought he would come back home. But by 6 a.m., he was gone," they said. A total of nine persons, all Ayyappa devotees, preparing for the Sabarimala pilgrimage, suffered severe burn injuries in the cylinder blast incident that occurred in Achchavva Colony in Hubballi. The other deceased individuals are Ajjasamy, also known as Bepari (58), Sanjay Savadatti (19), Lingaraj Biranura (20), Raju Mogeri (16), Shankar Urbi (30), and Manjunath Wagmode (18). Among the eight

# HCextendsrelief toKTRfromarrest

High Court directed the ACB not to arrest him till the verdict was pronounced



**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE** HYDERABAD, 31 DECEMBER

n a major relief to BRS working president KT Rama Rao, the Telangana High Court extended its interim orders and protected him from arrest in connection with the Formula E race case until the pronouncement of the verdict. Rao had approached the court with a petition to quash the FIR filed by the Anti-Corruption Bureau under the Prevention

of Corruption Act, against him. The court reserved its order on the criminal petition filed by the former minis-

Advocate General A Sudarshan Reddy raised questions on the legality of the agreement signed with the organizers of the Formula E race during the BRS regime. He pointed out that Rs 55 crore was disbursed without any authorization from the Finance Ministry, out of which Rs 46 crore was paid

in foreign currency, violating RBI rules. The Model Code of Conduct was in effect at that time due to elections in the state and Rao had signed the payment note as the minister of municipal administration and urban development (MAUD). He said the Governor had sanctioned proceedings against KTR on

However, KTR's counsel Siddarth Dave counter argued that the case was politically motivated and devoid of

17 December.

merit. He argued that the BRS leader had not personally benefited from the deal and there was no evidence of corruption in the case. He also said the FIR was registered hastily and no preliminary inquiry had been conducted. He sought the quashing of the FIR against Rao.

After both parties concluded their arguments, the court reserved its judgment. However, it extended the protection given to Rao, directing the ACB not to arrest him till the verdict was pronounced.

The BRS leader has also

been summoned by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to appear before it on 7 January in connection with the same Formula E race case. The ED had sought the details of the FIR from the ACB. The central agency filed an enforcement case information report last week in the case under various sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) following the ACB's FIR against KTR. Rao yesterday said that unlike in other cases, ED was taking a more aggressive approach in this matter.

### Karnataka BJP leaders conduct poster drive against Priyank Kharge; detained

### **AGENCIES**

BENGALURU, 31 DECEMBER

The Karnataka Police detained BJP leaders on Tuesday in Bengaluru for carrying out a poster drive against state Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Minister, Priyank Kharge in connection with the contractor suicide case involving his close aide.

Speaking to the media at the BJP state office in Bengaluru, the Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Coun-

Chalavadi Narayanaswamy demanded that the reasons behind deceased contractor Sachin Panchal's death must be determined through an investigation.

"The allegations of contract killing and honey trapping associated with the case are serious in nature. Names of individuals from Solapur, Maharashtra, have surfaced, making this an inter-state issue. Hence, the investigation must be handed over to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)," he demand-

Narayanaswamy stated that Minister Priyank Kharge had taken this matter personally and challenged BJP and its leaders.

"No matter how much they shout or tear their clothes, I will not resign," Minister Kharge reportedly said.

Narayanaswamy questioned, "What does this mean? Does this imply that our fight has no value? Is asking for justice a mistake?"

He further alleged that Priyank Kharge's close associates were involved in the case.

"For this reason, do not take this matter personally. If allegations have been made against you, face them with courage and allow any type of investigation," he challenged Minister Kharge.

Narayanaswamy accused Priyank Kharge of being evasive and mocking the situation.

"Minister Kharge says, 'Give me the address of the protesters and tell me how many are coming; I will arrange tea and coffee for them.' If this is not arrogance, then what is it?" Narayanaswamy asked.

"Would anyone come to your house to form a relationship with you?" he questioned Kharge.

"We are not here to build relationships; it is our right and duty to question the wrongdoing that occurred when we are in the Opposition," he said.

He advised, "If you are unsure how to respond, seek guidance from others.

He added, "Priyank Kharge seems to know everything about meddling in matters,

yethe doesn't seem to understand how to respond in this situation.'

He emphasised that the BJP's demand for Minister Priyank Kharge's resignation was expressed through posters, similar to the way Kharge had acted earlier. "The decision is yours, but the fight will not stop," he

warned.

Narayanaswamy stated that the case of Sachin's suicide as created a stir across the state. The issue has already reached the public. Minister Priyank Kharge's name has been mentioned in connection with the case, and not just the BJP but also Sachin's family is demanding a CBI investigation, he said.

He stated that BJP state president B.Y. Vijayendra, himself, and MLC Ravi Kumar had met the deceased's family. "When we visited, local leaders and MLAs from Congress, including the Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre, and the police were present. However, the family refused to let anyone from Congress enter their house," he said.

He added, "Under pressure, the minister eventually entered the house to have a discussion. However, when we visited, the family welcomed us wholeheartedly. This family is not involved in politics; they only want justice, nothing else.'

### Tamil Nadu govt cancels Smart Meter $contract \, to \, Adani \, over \, pricing \, is sue$



**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE** CHENNAI, 31 DECEMBER

deceased, five were the only

children of their parents.

In a significant development, the Tamil Nadu government has cancelled global tender for smart meters procurement despite Adani Energy Solutions Ltd (AESL) being the lowest bidder. The Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation Ltd, has cited the high cost exceeding its budget as the rea-

It is a victory for the anti-

Indian Navy marks

key milestone with

keel laying of third

cadet training ship

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

and other senior officials from

both the Indian Navy and L&T.

the signing of a contract on

7th March 2023 between the

Ministry of Defence (MoD)

and L&T for the indigenous

three Cadet Training Ships.

These vessels will play a pivotal

role in providing at-sea training

to officer cadets after their

initial shore-based training.

The ships will also extend their

training facilities to cadets from

friendly foreign countries, rein-

forcing India's growing role in

regional defense cooperation.

significant achievement in the

Indian Navy's commitment to

indigenous shipbuilding, align-

ing with the Government of

India's vision of Aatmanirbhar

Bharat and the 'Make in India'

initiative. The Long Term Inte-

grated Perspective Plan (LTIPP

2012-27) envisions a fleet of

three Cadet Training Ships,

which will further enhance the

Navy's capabilities to train the

next generation of naval offi-

The project marks another

This milestone comes after

**NEW DELHI, 31 DECEMBER** 

ning to issue a fresh global tender for the smart meters. Installing smart meters is part of the Rs 19,000 crore project - Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme which excludes agricultural connections. The Union Government has offered a subsidy of Rs 900 per meter. The Adani Group emerged as the lowest bidder for the

the state-runt utility is plan-

corruption NGO, Arappor package -1 of the project, Iyakkam, which has been involving 82 lakh smart meters in 8 districts including campaigning for long against awarding the contract to the Chennai. The tenders floated for three other packages also Adani Group, alleging huge scale corruption in it. The stand cancelled. Meanwhile, opposition Pattali Makkal Arappor Iyakkam has called Katchi (PMK) has also for a demonstration on January 5 in Chennai to highlight opposed the move. According to Tamil Nadu the corruption in the TN Generation and Distribution Electricity Board and Adani Corporation Limited Groups' 'involvement'. The (TANGEDCO) sources, the anti corruption watchdog decision was taken following is spearheading a campaign failure of negotiations to to register an FIR in the coal bring down the price. Now, import scam.

### TN varsity sexual assault case: BJP padayatra to press for justice **STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE**

CHENNAI. 31 DECEMBER

Continuing to keep the heat on the DMK government of MK Stalin over the sexual assault of a girl student in the prestigious Anna University, in the heart of Chennai, the BJP on Tuesday announced a padayatra from Madurai to press for justice for the vic-

"Condemning the atrocity meted out to the girl student and the DMK government attempting to prevent the full truth from coming out because the offender belongs to the DMK, the BJP Mahila Morcha will launch a padayatra from Madurai to Chennai on January 3," party state president K Annamalai said in a post on 'X'. The yatra would be led by state BJP mahila morcha President Umarathi and on its conclusion, a memorandum will be submitted to the Gov ernor, he added.

Annamalai's novel protest of flogging himself six times

### in front of his house last week to condemn the incident and deciding not to wear footwear till the DMK is ousted from power has only invited ridicule,

flooding social media with

memes.

Earlier on Monday, close on the heels of actor and Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) President Vijay meeting Governor RN Ravi, Annamalai arrived at the Raj Bhavan, urging him to ensure a fair and impartial investigation into the sexual assault case.

Governor Ravi is also the Chancellor of Anna University, a highly reputed institution for technical education. The victim, a second year student of Mechanical Engineering, was sexually assaulted on the night of December 23 after her boyfriend was thrashed and chased away. On her com-

क्रमांक प. 15/विद्युत / 2024 / 148

वेशी जा सकती है।

राज संवाद / सी / 24 / 9747

plaint, police arrested the accused, Gnanasekaran (37), running a roadside biriyani shop near the varsity. His third wife is a conservancy worker in the varsity. During initial inquiry, the police are said to have found a cache of videos on unnatural sex.

The Madras High Court, which entrusted the investigation to a Special Investigation Team (SIT) of three women IPS officers, has ordered Rs 25 lakh compensation to the victim and also directed the university to provide free education and boarding. The court also rapped the police for the way the FIR was written, in a tone of blaming the victim and revealing the identity as well as family details. Further, it pulled up the city police for the FIR being leaked in the public domain. The opposition

नगर निगम, पाली

Life

AIADMK and the BJP as well as the Naam Tamilar Katchi (NTK) of Seeman have been relentless in cornering the ruling DMK on the issue. Seeman was detained along with his supporters while holding a protest in Chennai earlier in the day.

AIADMKITWingmembers were also detained and cases registered against them for staging a protest demonstration in the city. This protest was in continuation of the AIADMK's state wide agitation. The AIADMK has christened the campaign "Who is that Sir" as the rape survivor had mentioned in her police complaint

that the accused received a call whom he addressed as sir. During the series of protests, party workers are holding placards 'Who is that Sir?' Countering the opposition onslaught, senior DMK Minister S Regupathy blamed them of playing cheap politics. "We will ensure speedy justice and there is no need for us to protect anyone. Tamil Nadu is the safest place for women. Even the NIC had clarified that the FIR was not leaked and that there was a technical issue that enabled some people to download it. It has been fixed shortly," he told the media.

### **TENDER**

### NORTHERN RAILWAY

CORRIGENDUM

The tender for the appointment of "Station Ticket Booking Agent" for NSG-4, NSG-5 & VSG-6 category stations in the jurisdiction of Northern Railway, Delhi Division is to be opened on 22.01.2025 at 15:10 hrs. Station Ticket Booking Agent (STBA) of NSG-4 and NSG-5 category stations i.e. Noli, Modinagar, Baraut and Pataudi Road respectively will be appointed for Night Shift only whereas for NSG-6 category stations STBA will be appointed for all shifts. All other terms and conditions will remain

### SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

### NORTHERN RAILWAY NOTICE INVITING TENDER

30-Elect-58-T-2024-25-E3 Electrical work in connection with Repair of plant, solar water heater (SWH), solar pumps and standalone solar street light and CAMC of above plant over Delhi Division. Approx. cost of the works in Sr. Divil Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi Rs. 253600.00

Earnest Money 27.01.2025, 12.00 Hrs 27.01.2025, 12.00 Hrs. Opening of tender www.ireps.gov.in & Sr. Divl. Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

### (Regd. Office : PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001) (Phone No.: 01881-275289) E-Mail: se-hq-ggsstp-ropar@pspcl.in

Press Tender (Short Term) Enq. No. 587/P-2/EMPW-12845 dated 24-12-2024 Dv. Chief Engineer/Headquarter (Procurement Cell-2) GGSSTP, Rupnagar invites open Press Tender for Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of 'Digital Data Display Board' for online display of information related to pollutants level in 'air emission' of GGSSTP, PSPCL, Rupnagar,

For detailed NIT & Tender Specification please refer to https://pspcl.in from 26-12-2024 from 04:00 PM onwards.

Note: - Corrigendum & addendum, if any will be published online at

https://pspcl.in

RTP-136/24

## **DELHI TRANSCO LIMITED**

### NOTICE INVITING e-TENDERS Delhi Transco Ltd ( A Government of NCT of Delhi Undertaking) invites online tender, for the following work:

Tender No.T24R220414 : Design, Engineering, Supply, Laying, Jointing, Testing and Commissioning of 220kV D/C 1X1200sq. mm. U/G XLPE Cable from 220KV Dev Nagar substation to 220kV Subzimandi substation on turnkey Basis.

For complete details of the tender please visit following websites :-

https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in

Unique No. DTL-9455-301224. Last date for bid submission: 17.02.2025 at 1:30 PM.

DTL\_267515\_1) website www.dtl.gov.in with

All Corrigendum/Addendum/ Amendments/Date of Extension/ Clarifications, if any, to the above e-tenders would appear only on

the above mentioned websites.

## **Controversies dominated** year 2024 in Telangana

### **AGENCIES**

HYDERABAD, 31 DECEMBER

From phone-tapping allegations to demolition of actor Nagarjuna's convention centre The keel laying ceremony for the third Cadet Training Ship, and from a Telangana min-Yard 18005, was held recently ister's offensive comments at the M/s L&T Shipyard in on Naga Chaitanya-Samantha Kattupalli. The event was Ruth Prabhu's divorce to the presided over by Rear Admiral arrest of actor Allu Arjun for Ravi Kumar Dhingra, Flag Officer a stampede at a theatre, con-Tamil Nadu and Puducherry | troversies dominated 2024 Area, alongside Rear Admiral | in Telangana. G K Harish (Retd), Head of Shipbuilding Business at L&T,

The Congress government's efforts to deliver on its poll promises, the Opposition's tirade over the government's failures, the Bharat Rashtra Samithi's struggle to bounce back after drawing a blank in the Lok Sabha elections and defections of its design and construction of ten MLAs marked the year.

The arrest of BRS leader K. Kavitha by the Enforcement Directorate in the Delhi excise policy case, arrest of three serving and a retired police official on allegation of phone tapping during the BRS rule, probe into some of the alleged scams during the previous regime were among the key developments that made headlines during the year.

The Congress government, which was only a few days old when it entered 2024, got

down to work. Opposition BRS and BJP targeted it for going back on its poll promises including six guarantees, but the ruling party cited the Model Code of Conduct for Lok Sabha elections which had come into effect in March for the delay in implementation.

After losing power late last year, the BRS suffered humiliation as it failed to win

even a single Lok Sabha seat. With eight seats each, the Congress and BJP shared the honours while the AIMIM retained Hyderabad. Making big inroads into

the BRS strongholds, the BJP doubled its 2019 tally. The saffron party also finished runner-up in six other constituencies. This is BJP's bestever performance in the state. The BJP, which won four seats in 2019 with a vote share of 19.5 per cent, improved its vote share to 35.08 per cent. This was a huge gain for the saffron party, which had polled 13.90 per cent votes in the November

2023 Assembly elections and

won eight seats in the 119-

member Assembly. The Congress party, which was hoping to win 10-12 seats, could win only eight. The ruling party suffered defeat in not only Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy's home district Mahabubnagar but also lost Malkajgiri, from where Revanth Reddy was elected to the Lok Sabha in

the previous elections. The Congress, which bagged three Lok Sabha seats in 2019 with a 30.2 per cent vote share, also increased its vote share to 40.10 per cent.

In Assembly elections held in November 2023, the Congress party won 64 seats in the 119-member Assembly, with a 39.40 per cent vote

The BRS, which suffered

its worst-ever defeat since its inception in 2001, failed to retain a single out of nine Lok Sabha seats it won in

The KCR-led party, which had won 39 Assembly seats with a 37.35 per cent vote share, saw its vote share plummet to 16.68 per cent.

The party, which ruled the state for 10 years, suffered a series of setbacks with defection of several key leaders including 10 MLAs to the Congress party.

The year began on a bad note for the Opposition party as it lost its young MLA from Secunderabad Cantonment G. Lasya Nanditha in a road accident.

in May along with Lok Sabha polls, the BRS lost the seat to the Congress. Ever since losing power, former chief minister and

In the bye-elections held

BRS president K. Chandrasekhar Rao (KCR) has not stepped into the Assembly. Frequent challenges thrown by Chief Minister

Revanth Reddy and the ruling

party failed to bring the Leader

of Opposition to the House. Barring the Lok Sabha campaign, KCR was rarely seen in public, leaving the field for his son and BRS working president K.T. Rama Rao and nephew and senior

leader T. Harish Rao.

KCR received a major setback in March with the Enforcement Directorate (ED) arresting his daughter and BRS MLC K. Kavitha in the Delhi excise policy case.

### CORRIGENDUM Ref: i) Tender Notice No.: 03/2024-25 dated: 10.04.2024 ii) Tender No.: 15235293 due on 18.03.2025 In reference to above tender, the due date has been extended from 07.01.2025

In reference to above tender, the pre bid conference meeting date has been

कार्यालय नगर निगम, पाली (राज.)

(लालबहाद्रर शास्त्री टाऊन हींल, सुरजपोल के पास, पाली, पिनकोड-306401)

ई- निविदा सचना

**NORTHERN RAILWAY** 

नगर निगम पाली में विद्युत कार्य हेतु ई-निविदा आमंत्रित की गई है। निविदा सम्बन्धी

In reference to above tender, 3 attached documents have been removed and 6 new documents have been attached

All other terms & conditions remain unchanged

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

(A Government of India Enterprise - Mini Ratna)

IRCTC Invites bids for the following:- Open E-Tender 2025/IRCTC/NZ /FP-FFU/OpenTender/Jan25: For E-Tender curr Auction for setting up, Operation and Management of Fast Food Unit at following

meeting: 08.01.2025. Last Date of submission: 21.01.2025 upto 15:00 hrs. OPEN E-Tender No.: 2025/IRCTC/Catg./Refreshment Room/JAN/25 Open E-tender cum E-Auction Bid Document for Provision of Catering Services in Refreshment Rooms for a period of 5 years area of DLI=256.19 sqm. and NDLS=173.48 sqm. Date of Pre-bid meeting 08.01.2025. Last date of submission 21.01.2025 upto 15:00 hrs.

Railway Stations: Makrana=46.48 sqm. & Banaras=46.45 sqm. Date of Pre-bio

3. OPEN E-Tender No.: 2025/IRCTC/Catg./JAN AAHAAR/JAN/2025: Open E-Tender cum E-Auction bid document for Provision of Catering Services in Jan Aahaar for a period of 5 years All(A1)=118,32 sqm. Date of Pre-bid meeting 08.01.2025. Last date of submission 21.01.2025 upto 15:00 hrs.

Open E-tenders for Provision of Onboard Catering Services in Trains, for a period of 5 years further extandable upto 2 years for a Cluster of Trains. Last date for submission and opening of the tenders 1st Phase on 21.01.2025 at 12:00 hrs. and 12:15 hrs. respectively & 2nd Phase on 04.02.2025 at 12:00 hrs.

5. Open E-Bid (Two packet bid) for Deployment of Food Safety Supervisors (FSS) and Lab Testing of Cooked Food and Raw Material, etc. for a period of one year at 100 licensee kitchen units of IRCTC. The last date & time for submission and opening for Open E-Bid: Upto 20.01.2025 till 15:00 hrs. & on 20.01.2025 at 15:30 hrs. respectively. Pre bid meeting: 03.01.2025 at 12:00 hrs. though both Online (Video conferencing) and offline mode

EOI for empanelment of advertising agency. Last date & time for submission 03.02.2025 upto 12:00 hrs. (EOI document availability by 10.01.2025). Open e-Tender No. 2024/IRCTC/EPR Compliance/2: Open e-Tender fo Fulfillment of EPR compliance on behalf of IRCTC under Plastic Waste Management Rules 2016 as amended from time to time. Last Date & Time for online Submission of bid: 10,01,2025 upto 15:00 hrs.

Open E-Tender cum Reverse auction for Supply, Installation and Commissioning of DG Sets at Rail Neer Plant Ambernath (Maharashtra) and Danapur (Bihar) Last Date & Time of online Submission: 10.01.2025 upto 15:00 hrs. For details visit www.irctc.com for 1-8, www.tenderwizard.com/IRCTC for 1-7 and

Notice Invites Open E-Tender No.: IRCTC/RN/DG SETS/2024/RA Dt. 16.12.24

GeM Portal for 8. Document downloading & participation can be done on website www.tenderwizard.com/IRCTC for 1-7 and GeM Portal for 8. In case of any corrigendum/addendum issued on the above advertisement it will be published only on IRCTC's website www.irctc.com for 1-8. www.tenderwizard.com/ IRCTC for 1-7 and GeM Portal for 8.

Office Address: IRCTC, 11" Floor, Statesman House, B-148, Barakhamba Road Connaught Place, New Delhi-110001; Tel: 011-23311263-64; Fax: 011-23311259

epaper.thestatesman.com

# 2024: India achieved breakthroughs in technologies, futuristic projects

India has been breaking barriers, from rolling out 5G networks to developing four Made-in-India COVID vaccines

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, 31 DECEMBER** 

he vear 2024 has been one of incredible progress for India in both technology and medicine. From AI changing industries to major breakthroughs in nuclear energy, space exploration and quantum computing, it has indeed been a year to remember.

The story, however, goes back much further. India has been breaking barriers, from rolling out 5G networks to developing four Madein-India COVID vaccines, not just for itself, but for the world. Today, the world is taking notice of India's spirit of innovation. With the third largest start-up ecosystem and a record 64,480 patent applications filed in 2023, India has firmly secured its spot as the sixth largest globally in patent filings.

A document released by the government highlights some of the significant breakthroughs and innovative projects that have been undertaken across various fields in 2024.

Powered by initiatives like the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) and Bulk



Drug Parks, India's pharmaceutical exports soared from over \$15 billion to about \$28 billion over the past decade ending FY24. Similarly, Biotechnology has also expanded 13-fold, from \$10 billion in 2014 to \$130 billion in 2024, targeting \$300 billion

by 2030. Thus, 2024 further cemented India's global

healthcare leadership. India developed its first indigenous antibiotic, Nafithromycin, a breakthrough against drug-resistant pneumonia with 10 times the efficacy with a three day treatment regimen.

The country launched Nex-CAR19, its first home-grown CAR-T cell therapy for can-

Globally, India joined the Biopharmaceutical Alliance alongside South Korea, the US, Japan, and the EU to tackle drug supply shortages. India resumed local

Production of Penicillin G after 30 years, a milestone for making the pharmaceutical sector self-reliant.

Transformative reforms like Liberalised FDI, Positive Indigenisation Lists, and opening Defence R&D to industry and start-ups over the past decade propelled

nations. Showcasing the nation's ability to defend against 5,000 km-class ballistic threats, DRDO conducted successful trials of the Phase-2 Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) System. India's nuclear power generation capacity doubled

India's underwater nuclear

deterrence. With a 3,500 km

strike range, it places India

under a select group of

from 4,780 MW in 2014 to 8,180 MW in 2024. The government aims to triple this capacity to 22,480 MW by 2031-32, showcasing a strong commitment to expanding nuclear energy. Currently, India is one of the leading countries with well-advanced thorium utilisation technologies, developed indigenously. India's bio economy has experienced remarkable growth, skyrocketing from \$10 billion in 2014 to over

\$130 billion in 2024. With a bold vision to grow India's space economy to \$44 billion by 2033, including \$11 billion in exports, the government is determined to set new benchmarks in space exploration.

By driving innovation, spearheading ambitious missions, and building worldclass infrastructure, India is rapidly emerging as a dominant force on the global space frontier.

Over the past decade, India has been leveraging technology in various innovative ways to expedite infrastructure projects, significantly enhancing efficiency and reducing delays.

In 2024, India added significant strides in transforming its transport infrastructure, embracing futuristic technologies.

A major milestone was the completion of India's first Hyperloop test track at IIT Madras, advancing the nation's vision for highspeed rail travel. India took a major step in modernising road infrastructure by completing pilot studies for the **Global Navigation Satellite** System (GNSS), which will enable a distance-based electronic tolling system.

The National Quantum Mission is propelling India toward global leadership in quantum technology, while BharatGen showcases the nation's commitment to developing AI tailored for India. In 2024, India made significant strides reinforcing its position in secure digital technologies and AI inno-

Date: 31.12.2024

Place: New Delhi

OANO 490/2024

HDFC BANK LTD.

Mithapur Ext South Delhi - 44

and seal of the Tribunal this the 18th day of Dec, 2024

# Congress will continue to fight 'anti-constitutional' thinking of BJP-RSS: Kharge



**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI. 31 DECEMBER** 

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge Tuesday slammed the BJP and RSS over recent remarks of Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Babasaheb Ambedkar and alleged atrocities against the Dalits and tribals in the saffron party ruled states including UP, saying his party will continue to fight the "anti-Constitutional" thinking of the BJP-RSS.

Kharge in a post on X wrote, "Union Home Minister Amit Shah insults Babasaheb Ambedkar in Parliament. The same anti-marginalised mentality is being repeated in the BJP-ruled states."

Replying during a debate in the Rajya Sabha marking the 75th anniversary of the Constitution's adoption, Shah in an attack on the Congress on 17th December said, has become a fashion to say Ambedkar, Ambedkar, Ambedkar, Ambedkar,

**UCO BANK** 

Sd/- Zonal Manager

UCO Bank, New Delhi Zone

DATE: 18.12.2024

APPLICANT

UCO Bank, ZONAL OFFICE, RECOVERY DEPARTMENT, 5 PARLIAMENT STREET, NEW DELHI-110001

EMPANELMENT OF INSOLVENCY PROFESSIONAL ENTITIES (IPEs)

Applications from eligible Individuals / Institutions / Agencies / LLP

Companies etc. for "EMPANELMENT OF INSOLVENCY

PROFESSIONAL ENTITIES (IPEs)" are invited at UCO Bank, Zonal

Office, Recovery Department, 5, Parliament Street, Pandit Marg Area

New Delhi-110001 latest by 05:00 PM on 07/01/2025. For eligibility and

BEFORE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-II, DELHI.

4th Floor Jeevan Tara Building Parliament Street New Delhi -- 110001.

Notice under section 19(4) of the Recovery of Debts Due to Bank and Financial Institutions

Act 1993 read with rule 12 & 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure Rule) 1993) in

To, Defendant D1. Mrs. Babli Sharma W/o Santosh Sharma D-378 Gali No 8 Om Naga

Whereas the above named applicant (s) has / have instituted a case for recovery of Rs

1,32,28,858.68/- (Rupee One Crore Thirty Two Lakh Twenty Eight Thousand Eight Hundred

Fifty Eight And Sixty Eight Paise Only) against you and where as it has been shown to the

satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in the ordinary way therefore, this

notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance in the Tribunal on 28.04.2025

At 11.00 A.M. Take notice that in default of your appearance on the day before the mentioned, the

case will be heard and determined in your absence. All the matters will be taken up through

video Conferencing or physical and for that purpose:- (I) All the Advocates/ Litigants shall

download the "Cisco Webex" application/ software: (II) "Meeting ID" and Password for the

date of hearing qua cases to be taken by Hon'ble Presiding Officer/ Registrar shall be displayed in

the daily cause list itself at DRT Official Portal i.e. drt.gov.in (III) In any exigency gua that the

Advocate/Litigants can contact the concerned official at Ph. No. 23748478. Given under my hand

other details, please drop a mail at: zonewdelhi.rec@ucobank.co.in

Ambedkar, Ambedkar'. If they had taken God's name so many times, they would have got a place in heaven."

Referring to recent incidents of alleged atrocities against the Dalits and tribals in the BJP-ruled states, he said, "In Madhya Pradesh's Dewas, a Dalit youth was killed in police custody. In Odisha's Balasore, tribal women were tied to a tree and beaten up...In UP's Muzaffarnagar, three Dalit families were forced to migrate because of caste-based attacks on them and the police remained silent." "It is well known that atrocities are being committed against Dalits, tribals, backward and minority communities under the anti-Constitutional rule

DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-I 4TH FLOOR, JEEVAN TARA BUILDING, PARLIAMENT STREET NEW DELHI-110001

of the Modi government.

(1) MADHURI W/O ASHOK

Whereas the above-named applicant has instituted a case for recovery of Rs. 24,71,552.66 (Rupees Twenty-four Lakh Seventy-one Thousand Five Hundred Fifty-two And Sixty Six Paisa Only) against you and whereas it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to

(ii) "Meeting ID" and "Password" for the next date of hearing qual cases to be taken by 'Registrar/ Recovery Officer-I/ and Recovery Officer-II shall be available one day prior to the next date at DRT Official Portal i.e. "https://drt. gov.in" under the Public Notice Head; (iii) In any exigency qua that, the

011-23748473. Given under my hand and seal of the Tribunal on this 16th Decmber,

Respondent may contact under mention Phone number for further enquiry. Ld. Registrar DRT-I, New Delhi Phone No: 011-23748473 Email: drt1delhi-dfs@nic.in

By Order of the Tribunal Section Officer, DRT-II, DELHI.

### TA NO 1418/2022 ICICI BANK LIMITED MADHURI AND ANR.

KUMAR SINGH, R/O H NO 2160/13, GALI NO 61, III RD, 60 FEET ROAD, MOLAR BAND, EXTN BADARPUR, DELHI-110044 (2) ASHOK KUMAR SINGH S/O SH. JAIRAM CHOUDHARY R/O H 60 FEET ROAD, MOLAR BAND EXTN. BADARPUR SOUTH DELHI-110044

serve you in ordinary way Therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance before Ld Registrar on 04.03.2025 at 10:30 A.M. 1st (for further details kindly visit DRT website www tribunal.gov.in Phone Number: 011-23748473). Take notice that in case of your failure to appear on the above- mentioned day before this Tribunal, the case will be heard and decided in your absence. All the matters will be taken up through Video Conferencing and

for that purpose: (I) All the Advocates/Litigants shall download the "Cisco Webex" application/Software;

Advocates/Litigants can contact the concerned official at Ph. No.

By order of this Tribunal

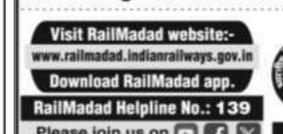
### F Kind Attention Rail Passengers IMPORTANT NOTICE

It is notified for the information of all concerned that Northern Railway's new Time-Table will be effective from 01.01.2025. Some of the important Salient Features/details of new Time-Table 2025 are as under :-

- Change in Departure and Arrival time of trains at terminals. (104 trains) (Including Preponement/Postponement of time)
- Revise timings of Arrival of trains (140 trains)
- Speeding up of trains (144 trains)
- Terminal change (03 trains)
- Change in train number (Mail/Exp. trains) (34 trains)
- Change in station name (03 stations)
- Change in train name (06 trains)
- Change in days of run (01 train)
- Change in nomenclature of trains:- Super Fast to Mail (14 trains) and Mail/Express to Super Fast (08 trains)
- Route diversion of trains (04 trains) 11. Raising of maximum permissible speed (03 trains)
- 12. Introduction of new trains (28 trains)
- 13. Extension of trains (21 trains)
- 14. Increase in frequency (04 trains)
- 15. Experimental stoppages (69 trains)

Passengers are advised that before commencing journey, kindly check the updated schedule through Rail Madad Helpline Number 139, NTES App, Indian Railway's Trains Enquiry website (https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in) or for further information please click on the below given link :-

https://nr.indianrailways.gov.in/view\_section.jsp?fontColor=bla ck&backgroundColor=LIGHTSTEELBLUE&lang=0&id=0,2,1706







## Cong slams BJP over Rane's Kerala remarks, demands his dismissal

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, 31 DECEMBER** 

Senior Congress leader KC Venugopal on Tuesday launched a scathing attack on the BJP after Maharashtra Minister Nitesh Rane reportedly compared Kerala to "mini Pakistan", saying it shows that the saffron party has deeprooted "animosity" for the people of the Southern state. He also demanded that Rane

should be immediately sacked. Reacting to Rane's remarks

ceremony, Jan 22

Sports

on Kerala, Venugopal, who is also the Congress general secretary in-charge of Organisation, said, "From time to time, the BJP deploys its hate mongers to spew venom against Kerala. Using terms like 'mini Pakistan' shows they have deep-rooted animosity for the people of Ker-

He said for the entire world, Kerala is a model state that has continuously topped the Human Development indices, especially on education, health-

care and overall standard of living. Pointing out that since millennia, Kerala has been a beacon of communal harmony and brotherhood among all religions and sects, the senior Congress leader asserted that to use abusive language for the land of Sree Narayana Guru, Chattambi Swamikal and Mahatma Ayyankali, who advocated for egalitarianism, inclusivity and social justice, shows the BJP's "disregard" for its own fellow

India 202

Controversy erupts over alleged

India's new criminal codes replace

colonial-era laws, including the IPC, July 1

Hemant Soren back as Jharkhand CM

Anant Ambani marries

wedding, estimated at

₹5,000 crore, July 12

Radhika Merchant in a lavish

following release on bail, July 4

question paper leaks and result

anomalies in NEET-UG medical

entrance exam, June 4

About 120 killed in a

event in Hathras,

Uttar Pradesh, July 2

At least 254 killed an

47 missing in Wayanad

district landslides,

Kerala, July 30

stampede at a religious

citizens.

### 3.47 lakh houses sanctioned under PM-JANMAN till now

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI, 31 DECEMBER** 

indigenous production to

record Rs 1.27 lakh crore

and exports 30-fold in 2024.

solidifies its position as a

global defence leader, achiev-

ing historic milestones in

advancement, DRDO suc-

cessfully flight-tested the

Agni-5 missile with MIRV

technology under Mission

Divyastra, placing India in

an elite group of nations

with advanced re-entry sys-

tems. The nuclear-capable

K-4 submarine-launched

ballistic missile was tested

from INS Arihant, bolstering

Marking a significant

strategic innovation.

As the year ends, India

constructed under PMAY- holds in rural areas of the G, sanctioning of 3,47,424 country by providing at least houses under the PM-JAN- 100 days of guaranteed wage MAN as on date and 70,905 employment in every finanhouses already been com- cial year to every rural housepleted across the states and hold whose adult members union territories are some volunteer to do unskilled of the main achievements manual work.

department during this year. Mahatma Gandhi Nation-The generation of 196.30 al Rural Employment Guarcrore person-days with a antee Act (Mahatma Gandhi total Central release of Rs NREGA) is an Act to provide 7,491.29 crore, additional for the enhancement of livelitwo crore rural houses to be hood security of the house-

of the rural development

 Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina ousted, flees to India following violent protests, Aug 5

STOP

RAFE

 Rape and murder of a 31-year-old trainee doctor in Kolkata sparks nationwide protests, Aug 9

 Tripura Peace Accord, signed between rebel groups and State and Central governments, ends 35-year insurgency, Sept 4

 Arvind Kejriwal, granted bail by SC on Sept 13, resigns as Delhi CM; Atishi Marlena takes over, Sept 21

India recalls High Commissioner

Sanjay Kumar Verma and expels Canadian diplomats as diplomatic row escalates over the investigation into Sikh separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar's killing, Oct 14

 SC disallows demolitions of homes belonging to those accused of criminal offenses, Nov 13

 DRDO successfully tests the country's first long-range hypersonic missile, Nov 16

### Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal arrested by ED in excise policy case, Mar 21 **Lok Sabha Polls** India's seven-phase election, the world's largest electoral exercise, begins on Apr 19, culminating in

a historic victory for the

BJP-led NDA and Narendra

third consecutive term as

Prime Minister on June 9

Tennis: Rohan Bopanna (43) and Matthew

Ebden win the Australian Open Men's Doubles

title, making Bopanna the oldest male doubles

Modi's swearing-in for a rare

India's maiden solar mission,

1.5 million km from Earth, Jan 6

Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren arrested

in a money laundering case, Jan 31;

India implements Citizenship

Amendment Act, easing citizenship for

persecuted minorities from Pakistan,

Champai Soren takes oath as the

Aditya-L1, reaches final orbit,

PM Narendra Modi

Nitish Kumar resigns as Bihar CM, ends

alliance with RJD-Congress, and forms a

new government with BJP-led NDA, Jan 28

Ayodhya during the 'Pran Pratishtha'

inaugurates the Ram Mandir in

new CM, Feb 2

Scheme as unconstitutional and

SC strikes down the Electoral Bond

Afghanistan, and Bangladesh, Mar 11

violating the right to information, Feb 15

### **Electoral Outcomes at a Glance**

Sikkim: SKM storms back to power; Prem Singh Tamang remains CM, June 10

Andhra Pradesh:

Big win for TDP:

N Chandrababu

Naidu takes over

as CM, June 12

majority, ending BJD's 24-year rule; Mohan Charan Majhi becomes CM, June 12

Arunachal Pradesh:

BJP returns to power;

Pema Khandu

becomes CM for

3rd time, June 13

परीक्षा

फिट से

कराई

जाए!!

Odisha: BJP secures Jammu & Kashmir: National Conference-Congress alliance wins; Omar Abdullah sworn in as CM, Oct 16

alliance secures another term; Hemant Soren begins 4th term as CM, Nov 28

Jharkhand: JMM-led

Maharashtra: BJP-led

Mahayuti wins landslide;

Devendra Fadnavis

Chess: Gukesh Dommaraju

became the youngest undisputed

**KBK** Infographics

becomes CM, Dec 5

Haryana: BJP retains power for 3rd term; Nayab Saini becomes CM for 2nd time,

Oct 17

Paris Olympics 2024: India's Medal Tally: 6 (1 Silver, 5 Bronze)

 Neeraj Chopra: Silver in Javelin Throw, his second Olympic medal

 Manu Bhaker: First Indian to win two medals in a single Olympics—both bronze, one in 10m Air Pistol and another in Mixed Team 10m Air Pistol with Sarabjot Singh

 Swapnil Kusale: Bronze in 50m Rifle 3 Positions Men's Hockey: Back-to-back bronze after Tokyo 2020

World Chess Champion at 18, defeating defending champion Ding Liren of China

with a thrilling 7-run victory over South Africa to win the T20 World Cup IPL: Kolkata Knight Riders defeat Sunrisers Hyderabad to

champion in Grand Slam history

Cricket: India ends an 11-year ICC trophy drought

Aman Sehrawat: Bronze in Wrestling (57kg)

Paris Paralympics:

Indian contingent wins a record-breaking 29 medals (7 Gold, 9 Silver, 13 Bronze)

claim the title Deaths

 Manohar Joshi (Former Maharashtra CM, ex-Lok Sabha Speaker)
 Pankaj Udhas (Iconic ghazal singer)
 Anshuman Gaekwad (Former India cricketer and coach) • Yamini Krishnamurthy (Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi legend) • Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee (Former West Bengal CM) • Natwar Singh (Former External Affairs Minister, senior Congress leader) • AG Noorani (Eminent jurist, constitutional expert) • Sitaram Yechury (CPI-M stalwart)

■ Ratan Tata (Tata Sons chairman emeritus, industry icon) ■ Rohit Bal (Celebrated fashion designer) ■ Shashi Ruia (Industrialist, Essar Group co-founder) SM Krishna (Veteran politician, ex-Karnataka CM)
 Ustad Zakir Hussain (Tabla maestro)
 Om Prakash Chautala (Former Haryana CM)

Shyam Benegal (Renowned filmmaker)
 Manmohan Singh (Former Prime Minister and distinguished economist)

epaper.thestatesman.com

Incorporating and directly descended from THE FRIEND OF INDIA - Founded 1818

### **Bond Boom**

he unprecedented rise in corporate debt fundraising by Indian companies in 2024 marks a transformative phase in the country's financial landscape. As firms raised a record Rs 10,67,000 crore through bonds, it is evident that the corporate bond market is evolving into a reliable and efficient alternative to traditional bank financing. This trend not only highlights the growing maturity of India's financial markets but also underscores the dynamic interplay between economic growth, regulatory shifts, and investor behaviour. One of the primary catalysts for this record-breaking year has been the yield on corporate bonds in the face of falling government bond yields. With the Reserve Bank of India signaling a rate cut in early 2025, borrowing costs are expected to dip further. This has encouraged firms to issue bonds, particularly long-term ones, to lock in lower rates. Another significant factor is the tightening of credit by banks. Challenges in deposit mobilisation and concerns about credit-deposit ratios have prompted lenders to moderate their credit growth. Consequently, corporates have turned to the bond market, which offers a more diversified and efficient source of funding. Moreover, the inclusion of Indian government bonds in global bond indices has created additional liquidity, freeing up domestic investors to explore corporate debt. This global recognition has had a ripple effect, increasing investor confidence and stimulating demand for high-quality bonds. A remarkable feature of 2024's fundraising spree is the preference for long-term bonds. The issuance of bonds with maturities exceeding five years surged significantly, driven by strong demand from institutional investors such as insurers and pension funds. These entities, which manage long-term obligations, find such instruments particularly appealing. What makes this development even more promising is the increasing participation of smaller and mid-sized firms in the bond market, suggesting its democratisation. These companies, which traditionally relied on bank loans, are now able to tap into bond funding, gaining access to capital markets on competitive terms. This shift is fostering a more inclusive financial system where firms of varying sizes can benefit from India's growing economic momentum. This shift is also indicative of a strategic alignment between corporate India's financing needs and the long-term growth prospects of the economy. With nominal GDP growth projected, the demand for stable, long-term funding is likely to persist, further solidifying the bond market's role as a cornerstone of corporate finance. The momentum in the corporate bond market is expected to sustain into 2025. Anticipated rate cuts and continued moderation in bank lending will likely drive further growth in bond issuances. However, this expansion brings with it a responsibility to uphold credit standards. A surge in issuances must be accompanied by rigorous credit assessments to maintain investor confidence and financial stability. This shift towards a vibrant bond market signals a maturing financial ecosystem capable of supporting India's economic aspirations. By embracing this evolution, corporate India not only secures a diversified funding base but also strengthens its position in a globally interconnected financial landscape.

### H1-B Dilemma

he H1-B visa debate has reignited, bringing to light the conflicting views on skilled immigration to the US among prominent figures and political factions. Tech billionaire Elon Musk, former Republican presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy, and President-elect Donald Trump are at the centre of this heated discourse, each shaping the conversation in distinct ways. Mr Musk, a vocal advocate for H1-B visas, recently escalated the controversy by threatening to "go to war on this issue the likes" of which you can't comprehend." His fiery defence of the programme stemmed from personal and professional stakes ~ he himself immigrated to the US and attributes much of his success, as well as the growth of his companies, SpaceX and Tesla, to the contributions of H1-B visa holders. Mr Musk has argued that the programme is indispensable for attracting top-tier talent, especially in fields like artificial intelligence and engineering. However, he has since tempered his tone, acknowledging criticisms of the system's misuse and proposing reforms to address them. Mr Musk's suggestion to raise the minimum salary for H1-B workers and impose annual costs on employers could make it prohibitively expensive for Silicon Valley to hire foreign workers over Americans, signaling a shift towards addressing the programme's vulnerabilities. Mr Ramaswamy, another staunch defender of skilled immigration, has emphasised the economic and innovative benefits of H1-B visas. He has argued that the programme's meritocratic foundation should be preserved, ensuring that only the most qualified individuals are granted access. However, his critique of American culture ~ claiming it undervalues intellectual achievement in favour of athletic prowess ~ has drawn mixed reactions. While his rhetoric underscores the importance of skilled immigration, it also points to broader societal challenges, such as the need to elevate STEM education and workforce development in the US. Mr Trump's position on the H1-B programme reflects his broader balancing act on immigration policy. During his first administration, he tightened restrictions on the programme. His latest remarks suggest an approach backing the programme while advocating for reforms that prioritise American workers. Mr Trump's evolving stance underscores the political complexities of the issue, as he seeks to reconcile the economic benefits of skilled immigration with the nationalist leanings of his MAGA base. The H1-B debate has also exposed rifts within conservative circles, particularly among hardliners who view the programme as exploitative. Critics argue that companies use H1-B visas to hire cheaper foreign labour, placing American workers at a disadvantage. Mr Musk's acknowledgment of these concerns, along with his call for reforms, highlights the need for a balanced approach that addresses systemic flaws without undermining innovation. Ultimately, the path forward requires thoughtful reform. By ensuring that the H1-B programme serves its intended purpose ~ attracting top global talent while protecting domestic workers ~ the US can maintain its competitive edge and uphold principles of fairness and opportunity.

# Swadeshi turns 120

'Bengal united is a power; Bengal divided will pull in several different ways. That is perfectly true and is one of the merits of the scheme,' wrote HH Risley in one of his notes on 6 December 1904. 'The only rejoinder that I can think of is that Bengal is very densely populated; that Eastern Bengal is the most populated portion, that it needs room for expansion and that it can only expand towards the East. So far from hindering national development we are really giving it greater scope, and enabling Bengal to absorb Assam,' added the civil servant who had contributed immensely to ethnographic studies on India. These words, often quoted in different contexts, attained a degree of notoriety.

ews headlines from Bangladesh, and the diverse reactions in India and other countries, are not only disturbing and distressing, but also disquieting as they bode ill for developments in South-east Asian politics. The promising dawn of the 'century of Asia' seems to be eclipsed in the dark shadows of violence. Bangladesh, liberated in 1971 with the help of the Indian Army, is at the crossroads of history facing the harsh realities of civilian-Army politics, ethnic clashes, bloodshed and social turmoil across its otherwise serene riverine countryside.

In the new year of 2025, it pays to recall the sub-continent's historic Swadeshi movement and the heights it reached in 1905: also, an opportune moment to pay homage to heroes of the movement, 120 years after their singular and often spectacular achievements. It is also an eyeopener to the shaping of nationalist thought and action which brought together some of the finest, bravest, boldest Indians when the decision to partition Bengal was implemented by the British Raj in 1905. The unity demonstrated in 1905 could serve as a lesson of history today.

Years before Prof Sumit Sarkar of Delhi University wrote the epic 'The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal 1903-1908', his address during the Indian History Congress in 1970 sought a deeper understanding of the nature and working of imperialism, both in India and on a world scale. His address was titled 'Imperialism and Nationalist Thought'; it was focused on Bengal while acknowledging equally significant political and social developments in Maharashtra and Punjab.

The *Swadeshi* movement had gained momentum ostensibly as a reaction to what seemed as a territorial reorganization of the Bengal Presidency. The undivided province had an area of 189,000 square miles and a population (in 1901) of 78.50 million. The plan of the British Raj was to separate the largely Muslim areas of the eastern areas from the predominantly Hindu areas in the west. Lord Curzon, then the Viceroy of India, forged this imperial plan to make West Bengal for Hindus and East Bengal for Muslims. What it triggered was an upsurge of different movements against the British Raj: Swadeshi had multiple strands, different voices and diverse trajectories all adding up to anti-colonial, anti-imperial struggles which took the British Raj by surprise.

Prof Sarkar pointed out, "Continuities at first sight seem more noticeable than breaks when we look at *Swadeshi* Bengal from the 'moderate nationalism' point of view, and more specifically its political aspects which had crystallized around concrete grievances like government jobs and Council seats, issues directly affecting only a handful...Partition was an affront to the growing sense of unity among the Bengali-speaking people, a sense by no means allpervasive but still certainly affec-



Swadeshi Movement

RAJU

**MANSUKHANI** 

deputy curator of

Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya

Congress politicians; the highhanded redrawing of maps by foreigners without any consultation with the inhabitants was resented as a peculiar gross kind of white arrogance and racial discrimination was the theme which could unite the proudest zamindar or 'bhadralok' with the meanest of plebians." The professor referred to a spectrum of

Indian newspapers continually focusing on cases of assault and judicial partiality, and the depth of bitterness amongst the people. The original Risley Scheme, explained Prof Sarkar, would lead to the transferred East Bengal districts getting submerged in 'backward' Assam and losing several privileges including its Legislative Council and a

Board of Revenue; the enlarged Partition plan would restrict employment opportunities for its people, reduce educational facilities by cutting off Calcutta from East Bengal. It would also curtail the jurisdiction of the Calcutta High Court, at the same time upsetting the Permanent Settlement as the new province of East Bengal would require new taxes. Civil servants like H H Risley had convinced themselves that the whole *Swadeshi* movement was being engineered by interest groups led by the 'bhadralok', and were consequently supremely confident that "the native will quickly become accustomed to the new conditions"

"Bengal united is a power; Bengal divided will pull in several different ways. That is perfectly true and is one of the merits of the scheme," wrote Risley in one of his notes on 6 December 1904. "The only rejoinder that I can think of is that Bengal is very densely populated; that Eastern Bengal is the most populated portion, that it needs rooms for expansion and that it can only expand towards the East. So far from hindering national development we are really giving it greater scope, and enabling Bengal to absorb Assam," wrote the civil servant who had contributed immensely to ethnographic studies on India. These

ting many others besides za- words, often quoted in different contexts, attained a degree of notoriety. What spurred Lord Curzon on was pretty obviously a political motive. Prof Sarkar quoted letters and notes from the Curzon papers, "The Bengalis, who like to think themselves a nation, and who dream of a future when the English will have been turned out and a Bengali *Babu* will be installed in Government House, Calcutta, of course

> bitterly resent any disruption that will be likely to interfere with the realization of this dream. If we are weak enough to yield to their clamour now, we shall not be able to dismember or reduce Bengal again; and you will be cementing and solidifying, on the eastern flank of India, a force already formidable, and certain to be a source of increa-

Lord Minto's memorandum dated 5 February 1906 was equally significant to note when he observed: "Yet partition should and must be maintained, since the diminution of the power of the Bengali political agitation will assist to remove a serious cause for anxiety...It is the growing power of a population with great intellectual gifts and a talent for making itself heard, a population which, though it is very far from representing the more manly characteristics of the many races of India, is not unlikely to influence public opinion at home most mischievously. Therefore, from a political point of view alone, putting aside the administrative difficulties of the old province, I believe partition to have been very necessary..." Minto's notes and memos are not merely part of India's administrative history but have added immensely to the social-cultural identity of the Bengalis, then and now.

sing trouble in the future.

In the context of current political turmoil, it is often overlooked that these eastern parts of India's subcontinent have historical legacies that stretch back centuries. The entire Bengal region during the thousand years preceding the British conquest had enjoyed long periods of autonomy and unity centred successively around Gaur, Dac-

editor@thestatesman.com

ca and Murshidabad. The social historian in Prof Sarkar has shown how the memories of such feudal independence and the undoubted facts of linguistic and literary unity, led to the emergence of something like a common culture at the village level based on an amalgam of Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim and primitive folk elements.

"On this came to be superimposed the more obvious unity of the English-educated bhadralok and its greatest creation ~ the nineteenth-century Bengali literature. Calcutta had become the real metropolis for the whole of Bengal, attracting students from all districts, sending out its graduates to teach in mufassil colleges and far-flung village schools, serving as the apex of the whole legal system and profession, and functioning also as the centre of trade by railway, river and ocean. Districts like Dacca, Barisal, Comilla or Mymensingh responded eagerly to impulses of social reform or political activity originating in Calcutta," wrote Prof Sarkar in 'The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal' for the benefit of those attempting to comprehend the complexity of India's socio-cultural ethos. The sense of unity demonstrated by Bengali-speaking people during the Swadeshi movement from 1903 to 1908 clearly could not be reduced to merely a few decades of political activities. With 1905 being the watershed year for the Swadeshi movement, Prof Sarkar identified five strands in what was clearly categorized as 'economic swadeshi': 1) organisation of technical education and industrial research; 2) promotion of swadeshi sales through exhibitions, shops and cost-price hawking by volunteers; 3) fostering and revival of traditional indigenous crafts; 4) starting of new industries based on modern techniques, and 5) floating of swadeshi banks, insurance companies and inland shipping

concerns. The spirit of *Swadeshi* was soon manifested through economic activities with a patriotic component: Kishorilal Mukherji's Sibpur Iron Works and Prafullachandra Ray's Bengal Chemicals showed the way. The popularity of their enterprises made the Swadeshi movement present a panacea for all the ills of India: industrial devastation, economic drain and growing unemployment. In fact, Ray explained the motives behind setting up of Bengal Chemicals: "Our educated young men, the moment they came out of their colleges, were on the look out for a situation or a soft job under the Government, or failing that in a European mercantile firm. The professions were becoming overcrowded. A few came out of the Engineering College, but they were helpless seekers after jobs...What to do with all these young men? How to bring bread to the mouths of the ill-fed, famished young men of the middle classes?" Despite the passage of 120 years, the basic causes of social-political unrest and turmoil in the subcontinent remain quite the same.

**OF THE** 



**ASIAN VOICES** 

### **Viet Nam's** defence diplomacy

n the 1980s, Viet Nam began demobilising its forces and modernising its military, prioritising the navy and air force. By the 1990s, Viet Nam entered an unprecedented era of peace, expanding economic and diplomatic relations while reducing its military footprint. A significant milestone was its election as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council in 2008-2009, where it played an active role in addressing global challenges, including the promotion of Resolution 1889 on women and girls in post-conflict settings.

In 2014, Viet Nam made its first direct contribution to UN peacekeeping, gradually expanding its involvement by deploying medical and engineering units. By 2024, over 1,000 Vietnamese personnel will have served in UN missions, reflecting a significant expansion of the VPA's traditional roles and enhancing Viet Nam's internation-

Viet Nam's involvement in UN peacekeeping began modestly, with two officers deployed to South Sudan in June 2014. This cautious start allowed Viet Nam to gain experience in peacekeeping operations. By 2017, Viet Nam expanded its commitment, sending officers to the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic.

The turning point came in 2018, when Viet Nam deployed its first Level-

### Việt Nam News,

2 military hospital with 63 staff to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan. This marked its first large-scale deployment in a peacekeeping operation, offering medical care to civilians

affected by conflict. In 2022, Viet Nam increased its engagement by deploying an engineering unit to the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei. This unit undertook critical infrastructure projects, including road repairs, school construction, and water well drilling, directly benefiting local communities.

By September 2024, Viet Nam had 291 personnel deployed in various peacekeeping roles, including military observers, trainers, and communications specialists. Notably, Viet Nam consistently exceeds UN benchmarks for the inclusion of women in its peacekeeping forces, showcasing its commitment to gender equality in international missions.

These efforts have earned Viet Nam widespread recognition from UN officials, including the Secretary-General and other senior leaders. Its decade-long peacekeeping contributions highlight Viet Nam's dedication to promoting stability and humanitarian values on a global scale.

The end of the Cold War brought new security challenges, such as disaster relief, countering piracy, and combating transnational crime. These issues spurred the growth of multilateral defence frameworks like the ASEAN Regional Forum, ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM), and ADMM-Plus, fostering closer

cooperation among member states. Viet Nam has actively embraced this trend by establishing defence attaché networks with 42 countries and participating in international military education programs. Vietnamese officers regularly attend staff colleges in countries like Australia, and foreign military personnel are hosted at Viet

Nam's National Defence University. In peacekeeping, Viet Nam collaborates with regional and global partners to enhance its capabilities. For example, the Viet Nam Department of Peacekeeping Operations was accredited by the UN in 2018 as one of four training centres in the Asia-Pacific under the Trilateral Partnership Program.

**IN MEMORIAM** 

**SEAL AMAR KUMAR** — It's been 25 years! Yet your thoughts transcend time. Fondly missed. — Ila & Bhaskar.



### Middle-class

**SIR,** As the new year approaches, salaried employees are likely to face significant tax deductions from their salaries for the financial year 2024-2025.

While taxes are deducted throughout the year, the months leading up to March 2025 will see an increased burden, further aggravating the financial challenges of India's middle class. Reduced take-home pay diminishes purchasing power, leading to decreased spending by the salaried class, which, in turn,

impacts the economy. Considering these challenges, the government is reportedly exploring measures to boost consumer spending. One such measure under consideration for the 2025-2026 budget is to make personal income up to Rs 15 lakh per annum tax-free.

If implemented, this decision would provide significant relief to India's middle class and stimulate demand for consumer goods.

Currently, the middle class faces immense financial pressure due to economic slowdown and rising living costs.

Taxation is currently gov-

erned by two systems: the old tax

regime (OTR) and the new tax regime (NTR). A reduction in tax liability would particularly benefit salaried employees, increasing their disposable income. This would lead to higher consumer spending, ultimately helping the economy recover from its slowdown.

For the financial stability and growth of middle-class families, a decision to make personal income up to Rs 15 lakh per annum tax-free is crucial. This would play a vital role in ensuring better financial planning and stability for the middle class.

> Yours, etc., Dattaprasad Shirodkar, Ponda, Goa, 30 December.

### **LAUDABLE**

**SIR,** Apropos the report "After 21-day, three-state escapade, runaway Zeenat captured", published on 30 December in The Statesman, it was surely a matter of relief that the three-year-old tigress Zeenat ~ which escaped from the Similipal Tiger Reserve of Odisha and covered hundreds of kilometers through the forests of Odisha, Jharkhand and West Bengal for three weeks ~ was captured by foresters in Bankura



on Sunday after tranquillising her. The way forest department employees tirelessly worked for Zeenat's safety as she many times came very close to human habitats and also successfully completed the rescue is laudable.

> Yours, etc., Sourish Misra, Kolkata, 30 December.

(NEWS ITEMS)

**DAWN OF THE** 

**NEW YEAR** 

**CALCUTTA SCENES** 

CALCUTTA ushered out 1924 and wel-

In addition to the ball at Belvedere, a

comed the New Year in a spirit of unalloyed

brilliant function attended by upwards of

1,000 guests of Their Excellencies the

Viceroy and Countess of Reading, all the

city's places of entertainment received a

degree of patronage that in some cases was

almost embarassing. Even the recent

Belvedere Ball, an array of costumes of

wonderful variety and originality present-

ing a dazzling spectacle. Animated scenes

the Empire Theatre afforded the city's

Scotsmen—and many others of equally

demonstrative temperament—the oppor-

tunity of bringing in the year in true Scot-

tish, fashion. On the stroke of twelve, Sir

Harry, who had been delighting his huge

audience for over an hour struck up "A

Guid New Year tae ane an 'a'", followed

by "Auld Lang Syne," in which the whole

theatre joined with a will, standing with

joined hands. The curtain finally rang

down with everyone on the best of terms

with his neighbour, stranger or friend. Sev-

eral of the more ebullient spirits produced

unsuspected bottles of the national bev-

erage, and were accorded no lack of sup-

outside the Palais de Danse long before the

event of the night, a fancy dress ball, was

due to commence. So great was the crush

that the gates were eventually closed

against the disappointed throng outside. A

crowded floor, however, did not deter the

dancers from making the most of the occasion. With five minutes of the old year still to elapse, the dancing stopped and the dancers formed a large circle. The twelve strokes of the hour were struck on a huge

gong, and Father Time came on the scene. "Auld Lang Syne" was sung, and then the band struck up "Rule Brittania," which was the signal for the appearance of Brittania,

Messrs. Firpo had a crowd of over 600

to cope with, an excellent dinner being fol-

lowed by a revel from which the dancers

extracted the maximum of enjoyment.

"Auld Lang Syne" was sung with great

verve when the New Year arrived. Scenes

of equal enthusiasm were witnessed at

accommodated a very large crowd, and

restaurants, were a feature of the earlier fes-

tivities. There were also many private parties.

FRANCE'S CURRENCY

**AGAINST INFLATION** 

ment between the State and the Banque de

France, adopted by the Chamber yesterday,

providing for the repayment by Govern-

ment of advances amounting to 23,200 mil-

lion francs, of which 1,200 million francs

will be paid on January 1, which will be par-

tially met from the proceeds of the hundred

million dollar loan recently issued in Amer-

ica, and also for further payments of two

Clementel, Finance Minister, said the Gov-

ernment was absolutely decided against

inflation, France had reached the limit, and

any decline in the value of the franc and

further depreciation must be avoided at all

costs. He added that the Government did

not contem¬plate the issue of a new franc.

The Government must do its utmost to

develop France's productive capacity, while

**NAVAL TOUR** 

A PARTY from the naval vessels now in

Calcutta arrived here yesterday. They were

conveyed in motor lorries to the Akbar Bar-

racks and from there to Fatepur Sikri,

where they dined and returned to Agra at

3 P.M. At 4-30 P.M., they visited the Taj

Mahal. There was a dance at the Agra Club

for the officers and entertainments for

other ratings. At 9 A.M., to-day they visited

the historical wing of Agra Fort and Sikan-

dra. At. 4 P.M., there will be a hockey match

at the Agra Club—Navy v. Army.

**VISIT TO THE TAJ** 

**MAHAL** 

diminishing purchases abroad.

In the course of the debate M.

THE senate has approved of an agree-

The Grand Hotel ball-room also

Dinner parties at the various hotels and

impersonated by Miss Crosby.

spirits ran high throughout.

**GOVERNMENT** 

milliard francs annually.

Peliti's.

"Full house" boards were displayed

port in their potations.

Fancy dress was de rigeur for the

The presence of Sir Harry Lauder at

Christmas festivities were surpassed.

marked the arrival of the New Year.

**BRILLIANT BALL AT** 

**BELVEDERE** 

**100 YEARS AGO** 

# A giant among men

**AMAL CHANDRA** 

'n an age of political theatrics and grandstanding, Dr. Manmohan Singh was an anomaly. A leader Lof few words but profound actions, his life—now etched in the annals of Indian history—was defined by a quiet resolve that reshaped the destiny of a nation. As India mourns his passing, we reflect not just on the milestones he achieved, but on the rare quality of leadership he embodied: one grounded in integrity, intellect, and an unwavering sense of duty.

Dr. Singh's rise to prominence was anything but conventional. Born in the village of Gah in present-day Pakistan, he was a child of Partition. The experience of displacement and hardship instilled in him a quiet strength that would serve as his compass through the corridors of power. He would often recount, not with bitterness but with perspective, the challenges faced by millions like him who were forced to rebuild their lives from scratch. His was a story of resilience a boy who walked miles to school, rising through sheer merit to become one of India's foremost economists, and eventually, its Prime Minister.

The defining chapter of his career arrived in 1991 when India stood on the brink of an economic abyss. As Finance Minister in P.V. Narasimha Rao's cabinet, Dr. Singh inherited a country crippled by debt and stagnation. The decision to dismantle the protectionist barriers that had defined India's post-independence economic model was not an easy one. Critics lambasted him, warning of the social upheaval such reforms could bring. But Dr. Singh's conviction was unshakable. Liberalization, he believed, was not just about economic growth—it was about unleashing India's potential, creating jobs, and

fostering entrepreneurship. "No power on earth can stop an idea whose time has come," he declared in Parliament, ushering in an era of transformation.

That moment alone would have secured his place in history. However, Dr. Singh's contribution extended far bevond the reforms of 1991. As Prime Minister from 2004 to 2014, he championed a vision of inclusive growth. Programmes like MNREGA, which guaranteed rural employment, and the Right to Information Act, which empowered citizens to demand accountability, were not mere policy measures—they were instruments of social justice. His government's push for universal food security and expanded healthcare access through NRHM reflected his belief that economic progress must touch the lives of the most vulnerable.

His handling of foreign affairs was equally transformative. The India-US Nuclear Deal, a landmark in strategic diplomacy, ended decades of nuclear isolation and secured India's long-term energy needs. In steering this contentious agreement through a fragmented Parliament, Dr. Singh displayed a rare blend of diplomacy and resolve. His statement during the debate—"I would rather go compromised the nation's future" revealed the steely core beneath his gentle exterior.

Yet, for all his achievements, Dr. Singh remained a paradox in Indian politics. His detractors painted him as a reluctant politician, a man overshadowed by the Congress Party's inner circle. It was an easy narrative to craft, given his soft-spoken demeanour and aversion to public confrontation. But those who worked alongside him knew better. Dr. Singh was never driven by the pursuit of



power. He saw politics as an exteneffect meaningful change. His relationship with Sonia Gandhi, often the subject of media speculation, was in fact a partnership grounded in mutual respect. He understood the limits of his authority within the party, but never allowed them to dictate his con-

Even his critics could not deny his integrity. In an era marred by corruption scandals and political opportunism, Dr. Singh stood apart. His lifestyle was austere, almost monastic. He derived no personal wealth or

privilege from his time in office. This down than be seen as someone who sion of public service—a means to authenticity resonated deeply with ordinary Indians, even as political opponents tried to frame him as a fig-

The 2014 general election, which saw the Congress routed at the polls, marked the end of his premiership. Dr. Singh, true to form, accepted the verdict with humility. "I have done my duty to the best of my ability," he said in his farewell address. There was no bitterness, no attempt to deflect responsibility. His tenure ended not with fanfare, but with the quiet dignity that had defined his career.

In the years that followed, Dr. Singh retreated from public life, returning to his first love—academia and writing. Yet, his voice remained influential. When India faced economic or diplomatic challenges, his insights were sought, and his words carried the weight of experience and wisdom. Until he retired from the Rajya Sabha in 2024, he continued to serve the nation in ways both visible and unseen.

On a personal level, those who met him speak of a man who carried his achievements lightly. His interactions were marked by warmth and humility. A personal anecdote comes to mind: when I met Dr. Singh to share a manuscript I had been working on, he greeted me not as a journalist, but as a fellow seeker of knowledge. His health had begun to falter, but his mind remained sharp. He could not read the entire draft, but his encouragement lingered long after our meeting ended.

Dr. Singh's passing leaves a void that is hard to fill. India has lost not just a former Prime Minister, but a moral anchor—a leader who navigated the nation through some of its most challenging times with grace and integrity. His legacy, however, endures. The institutions he strengthened, the reforms he championed, and the values he upheld will continue to shape India's journey.

As we say goodbye to Dr. Singh, we do so with gratitude. He may not have sought the limelight, but his impact is woven into the very fabric of modern India. In the truest sense, his life was a reminder that leadership is not measured by volume, but by vision. And in that regard, Dr. Manmohan Singh was a giant among men.

(The writer is an author, policy analyst and

# Undying commitment to human rights

**RICHARD HARGY** 

n December 1978, Jimmy Carter – who has died aged 100 – outlined his belief that American strategic decisions abroad should be shaped by an adherence to human rights. "Human rights is the soul of our foreign policy ... because human rights is the soul of our sense of nationhood."

In the sphere of foreign affairs, Jimmy Carter's one term as US president (1977-1981) had some notable achievements. The most significant was the 1978 Camp David accords. Carter, Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin, and Egyptian president Anwar Sadat signed an agreement that saw Begin agree to relinquish the entire Sinai Peninsula, captured by Israel in the 1967 six-day war, in exchange for peace and full diplomatic relations with Egypt.

This exemplified Carter's belief in the power of American diplomacy and why US presidents should courageously assume the difficult task of peace-making.

Twenty-five years later, and against the backdrop of the build-up to the second Gulf war, Carter was recognised for his role in the accords and awarded the 2002 Nobel peace prize. The Nobel committee said that while President George W. Bush was planning an invasion of Iraq: "former President Jimmy Carter was awarded the Peace Prize for undertaking peace negotiations, campaigning for human

rights, and working for social welfare". They added that the prize was in recognition of "his decades of untiring

effort to find peaceful solutions to international conflicts, to advance democracy and human rights, and to promote economic and social development".

On leaving office in January 1981, Carter sought to use his status as a former president to engage in the issues and causes that mattered to him most. He established the Carter Center to pursue his own course of personal diplomacy. Starting in 1982, the centre has monitored more than 110 elections in 39 countries.

Ahead of the 2020 US presidential election and as then president Donald Trump refused to commit to a peaceful transition should he lose, the Carter Center took the extraordinary step of designating the US as a "backsliding" democracy.

Carter, a devout Christian, maximised his personal relationships with former world leaders to promote democracy and human rights, support scientific work on eliminating diseases, and to mediate where possible to prevent conflict. His activism was not always appreciated by some of his White House successors, both Republican and Democrat. Randall Balmer, professor of religion at Dartmouth College, said that the former president's personal brand of diplomacy could often complicate and even contradict contemporary US diplomatic initiatives.

Carter was a member of The Elders, an independent group of global leaders working on peace promotion, social justice, climate change and global human rights. During his years of active membership Carter

dedicated significant energy to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, visiting the region on a number of occasions to support the Elders' work.

In the early 1990s the former president became involved in mediation work between the US State Department and several rogue states including North Korea and Libya. In 1994, Carter supported the US government's diplomatic efforts to resolve an increasingly tense nuclear weapons' situation with North Korean leader Kim Il Sung. Carter met with Kim in June 1994, becoming the first former US president to visit the country. The trip laid the groundwork for an eventual bilateral deal between North Korea and the US. The agreement saw North Korea pledge to freeze its plutonium weapons programme, while the US agreed to offer aid.

Carter continued to weigh-in on contemporary geopolitical events well into his 90s. He was openly critical when Trump announced in May 2018 that he was withdrawing the US from the Iran nuclear agreement, which had been negotiated by the Obama administration in 2015. He called Trump's move a "serious mistake". Carter felt that an international agreement made by an American president needed to be binding on all their successors and that by walking away from the Iran deal the US was signaling a "message to North Korea that if the United States signs an agreement,

it may or may not be honored". One of Carter's major accomplishments since leaving office was his centre's work in health care, and specifically the eradication of Guineaworm disease. This is a parasitic infection caused by drinking contaminated water. The consequences of the illness, while not fatal, can incapacitate the sufferer and lead to permanent disability.

The Carter Center committed to training over 100,000 villagebased health care workers, invested in education programmes and provided water filters to protect people from swallowing the parasite. The results have been highly successful. According to the centre: "incidences of Guinea-worm disease have been reduced from an estimated 3.5 million in 1986 to 13 in 2023,

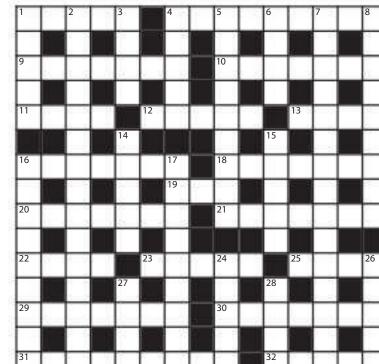
with the disease being eliminated in 17 countries".

Jimmy Carter's commitment to human rights never went away and his concept of a human-rights focused foreign policy has become permanently encoded in the global conversation. The former president's work brought him international acclaim, and illustrated why the nation's leaders should reject short-sighted calculations that risk the US being complicit in human rights violations.

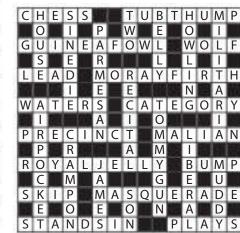
(The writer is Visiting Research Fellow in International Studies, Queen's University Belfast. This article was published on www.theconveration.com)

NO-293007

# **CROSSWORD**



## YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION



### **ACROSS**

Division of supermarket is into drink (5) Puzzling clue for 3

riders found here (5,4)Transfer a stolen design for spout (7) 10 English tend to

provide for universal support (7) 11 Watershed moment? 12 Trustworthy channel

13 Worry frequently with French and ... (4) ... Saunders essentially going on second after

support is rejected it's famously hard (7) 18 One's usually needled to learn Jennifer`s

missing first half (7) 19 Ultimately we cull musk deer (3) 20 Wasp, perhaps, to hover next to drink

21 Discontented servant not opening drawer to get plate with design (7)

22 Regularly visit hectic hotel to eat out (4) 23 Small farm regularly pursuing credit (5)

25 Flag is recognised international symbol for starters (4)

29 I disapprove of that list - revealing quality

of some online

searches (7) 30 Expedition travelling style (4) west in khaki kit – no knapsacks (3-4) 31 Game with clubs over

diamonds – profit not unknown - could spades help make your fortune here? (9) 32 Danger of a laundry detergent completely

fading a little shirt (5)

Modern day teacher's computer accessory

2 Improper accessory? Hold on, teachers

work here (9,6)

Bonnie Langford`s Band search round Sing with old partner

on the radio, wearing Liberal politician avoiding hail and whirlwind (4) Broadcast cunning horror film with

Queen and Prince of Wales, say (8-7) Shocking treatment following heartless of voters (9)

outside, on board Iron Duke (5) 26 Small farm's peaceful 27 Worker gets fine for

14 Attempt to change

eel's gender (5)

American goes to

16 You can pack it with

17 Submission of study

describing free

24 Simulated attack's

movement about

generate terror (5)

cooked bagel dough

15 Deduce where

on top (6,3)

Europe (9)

complaint (4) email, just lost millions 28 Retrospectively

criticises game (4)

To-night the officers and petty officers will be the guests of the sergeants, 2nd Battalion. Somerset L. I. at their annual New Year's ball. For seaman ratings there will be a concert and cinema at the Regimental Theatre.

NOTE: Figures in parentheses denote the number of letters in the words required. (By arrangement with The Independent, London)



## Leaders of Sharad Pawar's NCP muli merger with Ajit Pawar faction

The MPs and MLAs of the party plan to present their case in favour of going with the government in power

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE** MUMBAI, 31 DECEMBER

the Sharad Pawarled Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) are inclined to merge their party with the Ajit Pawarled NCP but Jitendra Awhad, Rohit Patil, and Uttam Jankar opposed the proposal, sources said in Mumbai on Tuesday.

The MPs and MLAs of the party plan to present their case in favour of going with the government in power and merge their party with the Ajit Pawar-led NCP at a meeting likely to be held by the Sharad Pawar's party on January 8 and 9, 2025 to decide the next course. However, everything will depend on what position NCP founder Sharad Pawar and his daughter NCP (SP) Working President Supriya Sule take on the proposal, sources said.

The Sources said Jitendra Awhad, Rohit Patil, and Uttam Jankar have opposed the pro-

posal of the MLAs and MPs as they feel the party must maintain its independent identity under the leadership of Sharad Pawar and play the role of an Opposition party.

It is learnt that somebody from Sharad Pawar's family has been urging him to join the government for reasons of "Pawar family unity". If Supriya Sule decides to support the idea of the merging with Ajit Pawar-led NCP and joining the government, the possibility of a merger of the NCP factions would get a decisive boost, the sources said.

If the majority of MPs and MLAs decide to join hands with the government, Sharad Pawar is likely to distance himself from the organisation he founded, according to the

Since the NCP has not been in power since 2014, the question being raised within the party by its MPs and MLAs is that how would it carry out development work in its constituencies for the next five

years and face the next elections. This is the reason why the MPs and MLAs are keen to see both the NCPs "come together" and move forward by strengthening the organisation, the sources said.

The Sharad Pawar-led NCP, which used to have 80 seats in the Lok Sabha, managed to win only 10 seats in the Maharashtra Assembly and the party's MLAs and MPs who had expected a Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) govern-

ment to come to power in the state were disappointed. They have shown signs of extreme restlessness and reluctance to sit in the Opposition benches for another five years, the

sources said As reported by The Statesman on December 11, Maharashtra State BJP President Chandrasekhar Bawankule and other Mahayuti ruling alliance leaders had claimed that some MLAs and Members of Parliament (MPs) of the

Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) parties are in touch with the BJP.

The development had sparked speculation that the BJP could launch an 'Operation Lotus' to lure Opposition MVA MLAs and MPs, get them resign and re-elected so that they could join the BJP-led Mahayuti ruling alliance. It was alleged that efforts were on to use such disgruntled MVA MPs to strengthen the BJP-led NDA alliance in the Lok Sabha, where it depends on support from from the Nitish Kumar-led JD(U) and the Chandrababu Naidu's Telugu Desam Party (TDP), so that the NDA will be far less dependent on Nitish Kumar and Naidu.

BJP leader from Maharashtra Pravin Darekar had claimed that some MPs of the Sharad Pawar-led NCP had re-examined their options after their party's dismal performance in the recently concluded 2024 Maharashtra assembly elec-

## 'Zero Poverty' campaign gains momentum in UP to meet 2 October 2025 deadline

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE** LUCKNOW. 31 DECEMBER

Uttar Pradesh is on track to become a poverty-free state by October 2, 2025 with the government aiming to identify extremely poor families across the state to ensure that they benefit from various government schemes during the period.

To achieve this goal, extensive surveys and verification processes have been initiated, forming a cornerstone of the "Zero Poverty" campaign. This initiative underscores the government's commitment to transforming Uttar Pradesh into a poverty-free

The state government is conducting a state-wide survey with the assistance of Panchayat Sahayak, Rozgar Sevaks, BC Sakhis, and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to identify 15 lakh extremely poor families. Priority is being accorded to families who are homeless, reside in kutcha houses, are landless, or depend on daily wages for their livelihood.

Once the survey is completed, the data collected will

undergo verification by village-level committees to ensure accuracy, claimed state Panchayati Raj minister Om Prakash Rajbhar here on

This ambitious initiative is leveraging digital technology for efficient execution. A mopup mobile app is being used to conduct surveys and verify data. Key details such as Aadhaar numbers, bank account information, and photographs of the beneficiaries are being uploaded through this app.

of village-level committees, including the village head, former head, school headmaster, self-help group leaders, ASHA workers, and Anganwadi workers, will verify the selected beneficiaries. At least three out of five committee members must approve the selection. To ensure transparency, all records will be accessible on the mop-up app and the Zero Poverty Portal.

CM Yogi Adityanath aims to improve the quality of life for every poor family in Uttar Pradesh by ensuring they benefit from government schemes. In the first phase

of the plan, priority is given to families who have not yet received any benefits. The Chief Minister has emphasized the importance of timely implementation and reaching every needy individual.

The administration is incorporating Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds alongside government resources to support its ambitious poverty eradication plan. This approach reflects an inclusive vision aimed at fostering both social respon-After the survey, members sibility and the development of the state. Partnerships with various companies and organizations will help uplift the living standards of identified impoverished families.

> At the village level, panchayat assistants, who are residents of their respective gram panchayats, are playing a key role in this initiative. Following CM Yogi's directive, these assistants are actively contributing to freeing their communities from poverty. The government has also addressed their concerns, including the prompt clearof ance pending honorariums.

### 18th India-Nepal military exercise 'Surya Kiran'kicks off in Nepal

**STATESMAN NEWS NEW DELHI, 31 DECEMBER** 

The 18th edition of the India-Nepal combined battalionlevel military training exercise, 'SURYA KIRAN', commenced today at Saljhandi, Nepal. The exercise will continue until 13th January 2025. This year, an Infantry Battalion from both the Indian Army and the Nepali Army will work together to enhance interoperability and share expertise in unconventional warfare methods, including Counter-Insurgency and Counter-Terrorist operations. The training will also focus on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief operations.

A traditional opening ceremony marked the start of

the exercise, with both contingents marching in unison to the melodies of Indian and Nepali military tunes. Maj Gen Prem Bahadur Gurung, General Officer Commanding of the Mid-West Division of the Nepal Army, addressed the gathering, encouraging the troops to learn from each other's experiences, strengthen their operational coordination, and reinforce the strong bond of brotherhood between the two nations.

The Indian Army contingent arrived in Saljhandi on 29th December and received a traditional military reception. The exercise will see the participation of approximately 700 defense personnel from both armies.

## Teen prodigy Ayaan Sajadaims to revive Kashmir's Sufi heritage amid modern trends

**PARWINDER SANDHU NEW DELHI, 31 DECEMBER** 

While many teenagers in Kashmir are increasingly gravitating towards modern influences, with hip-hop and global trends taking center stage, 13-year-old Ayaan Sajad(photo center) is determined to breathe new life into the fading Sufi cultural heritage of the region. Recently honored with the prestigious Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puruskar in the field of Art and Culture, Ayaan dreams of reigniting the connection between Kashmiri youth and their rich cultural lega-

Ayaan was one of 17 children to receive the esteemed award at a ceremony held at the Rashtrapati Bhavan



Cultural Centre. These awards, presented across seven categories, recognized excellence in Art and Culture, Bravery, Innovation, Science & Technology, Social Service, Sports, and Environment.

Ayaan, a student of Class Xat Birla Open Minds International School in Srinagar, first gained national attention after his rendition of the iconic Kashmiri song Bedard Dadi Chane went viral on

social media. The song, originally composed by the revered 17th-century Sufi poet Shamas Fakeer, blends traditional Kashmiri melodies with contemporary styles, earning Ayaan millions of views and widespread acclaim.

In an interview with The Statesman, Ayaan expressed his deep concern about the eroding cultural ties among the youth in Kashmir. "It pains me to see youngsters forgetting their rich heritage in the pursuit of modernity. Many prefer to wear hoodies instead of the traditional pheran (the iconic Kashmiri robe). Even when I wear a pheran, my friends sometimes question me," he shared, his eyes reflecting both nostalgia and determination.

Ayaan's passion for pre-

serving Kashmir's cultural identity is deeply rooted in his love for Sufi music. "Sufism has always held a special place in Kashmiri culture,' he explained. "When I started singing, it was always Sufi music that resonated with me. I hope to revive this beautiful tradition in the val-

ley." Hailing from Anantnag in South Kashmir, Ayaan moved to Srinagar with his elder brother and mother. Coming from a family of educators, he found inspiration in the local musicians he met, whose music ignited his passion for preserving the region's cultural heritage. "I was homeschooled until Class 9, and when I met these artists, their music deeply inspired me," Ayaan recalled.

railway authorities of negli-

gence, stating that the train

was traveling at an estimated

speed of 50 km/h -- far exceed-

### VK Singh to assume Mizoram Governorship on 9 January

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

AIZAWL, 31 DECEMBER

General Vijay Kumar Singh, former Chief of Army Staff, will officially assume office as the Governor of Mizoram on January 9.

The swearing-in ceremony, to be held at the Raj Bhavan, will witness the attendance of Chief Minister Lalduhoma, his cabinet colleagues, Mizoram Assembly Speaker Lalbiakzama, Deputy Speaker Lalfamkima, Members of Parliament, senior officials, and distinguished invitees. The oath of office and secrecy will be administered by the Chief Justice of the Gauhati High Court.

General Singh was appointed as Mizoram's Governor by President Droupadi Murmu, succeeding Hari Babu Kambhampati, who recently took over as Governor of Odisha following Raghubar Das's resignation. Born in 1951, General Singh

boasts a distinguished career in both military and political spheres. He served as the 24th Chief of Army Staff from 2010 to 2012, earning accolades for his leadership.

Transitioning to politics in 2014, he joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and has since represented Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, in the Lok Sabha, securing re-election in 2019.

**During Prime Minister** Narendra Modi's first term, Singh held multiple ministerial roles, including Minister of State for External Affairs, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), and Minister of State for Statistics and Programme Implementation.

### **STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE**

LUCKNOW, 31 DECEMBER

The year 2024 saw major upheavals in the politics of Uttar Pradesh, with the ruling BJP making a strong comeback in the assembly bypolls after tasting defeat in the general The year commenced with

the inauguration of Ram Temple in Ayodhya and thereafter the crucial Lok Sabha polls followed by assembly bypolls and 2024 ended with grand preparation for the Prayagraj Mahakumbh-2025.

From the BJP's steep decline in the Lok Sabha elections to its resilient comeback in the bypolls, Uttar Pradesh witnessed a rollercoaster. The SP-Congress duo had won 43 out of the total 80 seats in the Lok Sabha polls but in reversal, BJP grabbed 7 out



This year, in a setback, the number of BJP MPs in the state decreased from 62 to 32 and that of NDA from 64 to 36. As a result, the state's dominance in national politics declined and Varanasi MP Narendra Modi, for the first time in his journey from CM to PM, had to form a coalition government in which the BJP does not have an absolute

But by the end of the year, the state witnessed several controversies over excavation of religious places in Sambhal ,Badaun, Moradabad, Bulandof 9 in the assembly bypolls. shahr and other places. pollalliance between Congress

Besides, the court was still hearing the demand for survey of Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi, Taj Mahal, Tile wall mosque in Lucknow, Jama Maszid in Sambhal and in other places too.

Uttar Pradesh's political roller coaster shines in 2024

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's slogan of "Batoge to Katoge" during UP assembly bypolls too created much controversy. But this slogan along with excavation of religious places have toned up polarised politics of BJP in the way for 2027 assembly polls in the state.

Though opposition particularly SP has raked up its PDA( Pichra, Dalit, Alpasankyak) and was trying to thrust on it to win the 2027 polls in UP like the Lok Sabha polls. Congress was far behind in generating its popularity among the masses and there is very less chance of any preand SP in the coming assembly polls.

Death of mafia don Mukhtar Ansari, who was lodged in the Banda jail, in a heart attack on March 28, also witnessed an end of an era of crime in Purvanchal. Besides, encounter of Mangesh Yadav in Sultanpur by UP Police also attracted opposition ire for being selective in action on the basis of caste.

The state also witnessed a horrifying incident on July 2 when 121 people, mostly women and children were killed in a stampede in Hathras during a religious function of Bhole Baba.

However, the year started with Ramlala ascending the throne after waiting for 500 years in Ayodhya on January

Ram temple was inaugurated by Prime Minister Naren-

**AGENCIES** AGARTALA,31 DECEMBER

A 35-year-old wild elephant, critically injured by a speeding injuries late Monday night, officials said on Tuesday.

Despite the best efforts of doctors from the state veterinary hospital, the animal could not be saved. "The jumbo succumbed to its injuries late Monday night, despite intensive medical care," a senior forest

doctors, in the presence of forest and wildlife officials, conducted a postmortem

ment filed an FIR with the Government Railway Police in Teliamura and lodged a formal complaint with the Northeast Frontier Railway's

### Wild elephant hit by speeding train in Tripura succumbs to injuries Divisional Manager in Lumding. ing the 20 km/h limit designated The department accused the

train in Tripura's Khowai district, succumbed to its

official confirmed. On Tuesday, three veterinary

before the elephant was buried.

The Tripura Forest Depart-

for elephant corridors in the area. The incident occurred Saturday night when a local train traveling from Agartala

elephant in the Shalbagan area under the Teliamura Forest Division.

Both of the elephant's hind legs were fractured, leaving it to Dharmanagar struck the immobile.

Advt. No. J.SV 60(2024-25)

### **TENDER**

### DELHI JAL BOARD; GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI NIT No. 03/EE(D)-112/2024-25 Money of tender in (In Rs.) tender procurement through e-procureme Engagement of 8 KL jetting cum suction machine 09.01.2025 upto 2024 \_DfB for maintenance of sewerage system along with 2 jet 3:00 PM 267195 1 vihar Constituency (AC-49) under EE(D)-112 (Reinvited) EXECUTIVE ENGINEER(D)-112 Last date/time o Name of Work (EMD) in Date of release of tender in receipt of tender through e e- procurement solution procurement Operation and Comprehensive Maintenance of 1 MGD STP Based 2024 16:01.2025 up on Membrane Bio-Reactor (MBR) Technology at, Common DJB\_267361\_1 to 3.00 PM Wealth Games Village, Akshardham for the period of 13 Montl Dt. 27, 12,2024 Executive Engineer (SDW) XIV

### Akharas, Kalpvasis to get subsidised flour at ₹ 5, rice at ₹ 6 per kg during Mahakumbh

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE MAHAKUMBHNAGAR,

31 DECEMBER

In a move to support Akharas, institutions and Kalpvasis during Mahakumbh 2025, the Uttar Pradesh government has launched a subsidised ration scheme, offering flour at Rs 5 per kg and rice at Rs 6 per kg.

A total of 138 fair price shops have been set up in the fair area for smooth distribution.

Officials here on Tuesday said Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has instructed officials to make comprehensive arrangements, with special attention to the food requirements of devotees. The government has effectively opened its "food granary" for the Mahakumbh, arranging for 1.2 lakh white ration cards for Kalpvasis to have access to subsidised items.

Kalpvasis, Akharas, and



institutions will benefit from significantly reduced prices on essential supplies. Flour will be available at Rs 5 per kilogram, rice at Rs 6 per kilogram, and sugar at Rs 18 per kilogram. Additionally, the government has allocated 800 permits to Akharas and institutions.

to subsidised rations, the government has ensured comprehensive facilities for cooking food during Mahakumbh 2025. Agencies have been appointed in all 25 sectors to

provide new gas connections

to Kalpvasis, Akharas, and

institutions, along with seam-

Kalpvasis with their own three types of gas cylinders -- 5 kg, 14.2 kg, and 19 kg --

empty gas cylinders can also avail of refilling facilities. Special arrangements have been made to accommodate to cater to varying needs. To ensure uninterrupted

shops have been set up in the Mahakumbh area. Additionally, five food storage warehouses have been prepared, stocked with 6,000 metric tonnes of flour, 4,000 metric tonnes of rice, and 2,000 metric tonnes of sugar. These facilities aim to prevent any inconvenience to Akharas, Kalpvasis, and institutions. Under this initiative, each

food supply, 138 fair price

Kalpvasi will be provided with 3 kg flour, 2 kg rice, and 1 kg of sugar. This ration facility will be available from January through the end of February.

The "One Nation One Card" scheme will also be implemented to ensure accessibility for all eligible beneficiaries. To further streamline the distribution process, each shop has been stocked with 100 quintals of goods to meet the daily needs of the par-

ticipants. (Representational image)

### **NORTHERN RAILWAY**

NIT along with all the terms & conditions is available on DJB Web Site https://govteprocurement.delhi.gov.in.

(E-Auction Notice) Sr.Divisional Commercial Manager/PS, Northern Railway Delhi Division invites bids through e-Auction through IREPS (http://ireps.gov.in) for the allotment of under mention contracts at following Railway stations/locations:

E-Catalogue Date & Time Railway Stations/Locations/Lots of bidding New Delhi Ajmeri Gate Side (PCCV), Meerut Cantt (Kankankhera), Naya 16.12.2024 Parking-Ghaziabad, Delhi (PF-16) (B-T-T), New Delhi (AGS Side) (TW Parking), Karnal 28-2024 11.00 Hrs (641.62 Sq.Mtrs.), Kurukshetra 1st Entry, Kurukshetra 2nd Entry, Ghaziabad (Bhoor Side) (1150.67 sq.mtrs.), Delhi 2nd Entry KGS Side (TW Parking), Budhiada, Bareta, Muradnagar, Sampla (Main Entry), Khatauli, Kurukshetra (Site-1), Kurukshetra (Site-2), Panipat (2nd Entry), Adarsh Nagar(PRS), Delhi Sarai Rohilla (Car), Karnal (375 Sq.Mtrs), Shahabad Markanda, Delhi Sadar Bazar (1603.94 Sq.Mtrs) = Total 23 Sites

Website particulars where complete details of E-Auction can be seen

https://ireps.gov.in/ All contractors who intend to participate in the e-auctions conducted through E-Auction Leasing module of IREPS should fulfil following mandatory requirements before they can submit their bids: Registration on IREPS for E-Auction Leasing Module -Active IREPS User Account for E-Auction Leasing

Payment of One Time Registration Fee

Current Account in State Bank of India Integration of SBI Bank Account with IREPS Account

 -Lien Marking of Funds Updation of Tumover Details

Contractors who do not have IREPS account for any module of IREPS can submit their online request for registration by clicking on New Vendors / Contractors (E-Tender/E-Auction Leasing) link on IREPS Home

Railway Authority to contact, in case of any query

Divisional Railway Manager's Office, Commercial Branch, State Entry Road, New Delhi 110055. Email:pkg.delhidivision@gmail.com Tel: 011-23743084

No. 23AC/393/E-Auction/2022 Dated: 31.12.2024 **Serving Customers With A Smile** 

## New Zealand's Auckland welcomes the new year 2025 with fireworks

Countries in the South Pacific Ocean are the first to ring in the New Year, with midnight in New Zealand striking 18 hours before the ball drop in Times Square in New York

**AGENCIES** 

WELLINGTON, 31 DECEMBER

uckland has become the first major city to welcome 2025, with thousands of revelers counting down to the new year and cheering at colorful fireworks launched from New Zealand's tallest structure, Sky Tower, and a spectacular downtown light show.

Thousands also thronged to downtown or climbed the city's ring of volcanic peaks for a fireworks vantage point, and a light display recognizing Auckland's Indigenous tribes. It follows a year marked by protests over M ori rights in the nation of 5 million.

Countries in the South Pacific Ocean are the first to ring in the New Year, with midnight in New Zealand



striking 18 hours before the ball drop in Times Square in New York. Other cities around the world are readying with celebrations highlighting local cultures and traditions, after a year roiled by ongoing conflict and political insta-

In Australia, more than 1 million people are now expected at Sydney Harbour for the traditional fireworks.

British pop star Robbie Williams will lead a singalong and Indigenous ceremonies and performances will acknowledge the land's first people.

Much of Japan has shut down ahead of the nation's biggest holiday, as temples and homes underwent a thorough cleaning, including swatting floor mats called "tatami" with big sticks.

The upcoming Year of the Snake in the Asian zodiac is heralded as one of rebirth — alluding to the reptile's shedding skin. Stores in Japan, which observes the zodiac cycle from January. 1, have been selling tiny figures of smiling snakes and other snake-themed products. Other places in Asia will start marking the Year of the Snake later, with the Lunar New Year.

In South Korea, celebrations were cut back or canceled as the country observes a period of national mourning following the Sunday crash of a Jeju Air flight at Muan that killed 179 people.

New Year celebrations in Jakarta will feature a dazzling fireworks display, including a drone show featuring 800 drones, followed by countdowns to midnight at the

city's iconic Hotel Indonesia Roundabout. Chinese state media covered an exchange of New Year's greetings between leader Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin in a reminder of growing closeness between two leaders who face tensions with the West.

Xi told Putin that their countries will "always move forward hand in hand," the official Xinhua News Agency said Tuesday.

China has maintained ties and robust trade with Russia since the latter invaded Ukraine in 2022, helping to offset Western sanctions and attempts to isolate Putin. New Year's celebrations are likely to be subdued in Israel as its war with Hamas in Gaza grinds through a 15th month and scores of hostages remain in captivity.

### Russian missile, drone attack on Ukraine hits multiple targets, including Kyiv

**AGENCIES** 

KYIV. 31 DECEMBER

Russia launched an aerial attack on Ukraine on Tuesday, striking the capital and other regions with multiple missiles and drones.

Ukraine's air force reported a ballistic missile threat at 3:00 am. (0100 GMT), with at least two explosions heard in Kyiv minutes later. Another missile alert was issued at 8:00 am. followed by at least one explosion in the city. Missile debris fell in the Darnytskyi district of the capital with no reports of casualties or damage, the local administration said.

Authorities in the northeastern Sumy region reported strikes near the city of Shostka, where the mayor, Mykola Noha, said 12 residential buildings had been damaged as well as two educational facilities. He said some "social infrastructure objects" were destroyed, without providing detail. The air force also reported missiles and drones



targeting several other regions of Ukraine.

In Moscow, the Russian Defense Ministry said that its forces successfully struck a Ukrainian air base and a gunpowder factory.

Around half of Ukraine's energy infrastructure has been destroyed during the war, and rolling electricity blackouts are common and widespread. Kyiv's Western allies have provided air defense systems to help Ukraine protect critical infrastructure, but Russia has sought to overwhelm its air defenses with combined strikes involving large numbers of missiles

and drones.

Russian attacks come as uncertainty looms over the course of the nearly threevear conflict. U.S. Presidentelect Donald Trump, who takes office next month, has vowed to end the war and has thrown into doubt whether vital U.S. military support for Kyiv will continue. On Monday, President Joe Biden announced that the United States will send an additional \$2.5 billion in weapons to Ukraine as his administration works quickly to spend all the money it has available to help Kyiv fight off Russia before Trump takes office.

### 'No heating, no light': Moldovans fear looming energy shortage as Russia halts gas supplies

**AGENCIES** 

On a frigid morning in Moldova's capital, 39-year-old postal worker Petru Murzin braces for a difficult winter as he fears a looming energy shortage could leave many Moldovans with "no heating, no light."

His concerns aren't unfounded. On 1 January, Russia's

state-owned energy giant Gazprom is set to halt gas supplies to the European Union candidate country over an alleged \$709 million debt for past supplies, a figure fiercely disputed by Moldova's pro-Western government, that has accused Moscow of



weaponizing energy as a political tool to destabilize the country.

"I feel that we've entered a crisis that is quite difficult to resolve ... which worries me greatly," Murzin told *The* Associated Press in Chisinau. "Price increases are one thing, but when there is no gas at all, that's something entirely different."

The cessation will stop gas flowing to the Kuciurgan power plant, the country's largest,

which is situated in the separatist pro-Russian Transnistria region. The gas-operated plant generates electricity that powers a significant portion of Moldova proper.

"There will be no heating, no light," Murzin added. "We are entering a very difficult year.'

Transnistria, which broke away after a short war in 1992 and is not recognized by most countries, also declared its own state of emergency earlier this month, fearing the region will not receive gas supplies. Alarge majority of Transnistria's 470,000 people speak Russian as their first language and some 200,000 are Russian citizens.

## South Korean court issues warrants to detain impeached President Yoon and search his office

**AGENCIES** 

SEOUL, 31 DECEMBER

A South Korean court issued warrants Tuesday to detain impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol and search his office and residence over allegations of rebellion in connection with his short-lived declaration of martial law.

It's the first time a warrant has been issued to detain a sitting South Korean president. But experts say there is little chance of detention or searches unless Yoon is formally removed from office.

The Seoul Western District Court issued warrants to detain Yoon and to search



the presidential office and residence in central Seoul, according to a statement from the Corruption Investigation Office for High-Ranking Officials, which is leading

a joint investigation with

police and military authorities.

The agency says it's been investigating whether Yoon's 3 December declaration amounted to rebellion.

Under South Korean law,

the leader of a rebellion can gencies and has no right to face the death penalty or life suspend parliament's operimprisonment if convicted. ations even under martial Yoon has presidential immunity from most criminal pros-Yoon has argued his decree was a legitimate act of govecutions, but the privilege ernance, calling it a warning does not extend to allegations

of rebellion or treason. to the main liberal opposition Democratic Party — which Yoon's powers have been suspended since the oppohe has called "a monster" sition-controlled National and "anti-state forces" — Assembly voted to impeach that has used its legislative majority to impeach top offihim on 14 December over his imposition of martial cials, undermine the government's budget, and which law, during which hundreds he claims sympathizes with of troops and police officers were deployed at the assem-North Korea. bly. By law, a president in The Constitutional Court South Korea is allowed to declare martial law only dur-

is to determine whether to dismiss Yoon as president or reinstate him.

### Jimmy Carter: Many evolutions for a centenarian 'citizen of the world'

**AGENCIES** 

PLAINS, 31 DECEMBER

Newly married and sworn as a Naval officer, Jimmy Carter left his tiny hometown in 1946 hoping to climb the ranks and see the world.

Less than a decade later, the death of his father and namesake, a merchant farmer and local politician who went by "Mr. Earl," prompted the submariner and his wife, Rosalynn, to return to the rural life of Plains, Georgia, they thought they'd escaped.

The lieutenant never would be an admiral. Instead, he became commander in chief. Years after his presidency ended in humbling defeat, he would add a Nobel Peace



Prize, awarded not for his White House accomplishments but "for his decades of untiring effort to find peaceful solutions to international conflicts, to advance democracy and human rights, and to promote economic and social development."

The life of James Earl Carter Jr., the 39th and longestlived U.S. president, ended Sunday at the age of 100 where it began: Plains, the town of 600 that fueled his political rise, welcomed him after his fall and sustained him during 40 years of service to be a former president.

that redefined what it means

With the stubborn confidence of an engineer and an optimism rooted in his Baptist faith, Carter described his motivations in politics and beyond in the same way: an almost missionary zeal to solve problems and improve lives.

Carter was raised amid racism, abject poverty and hard rural living — realities that shaped both his deliberate politics and emphasis on human rights.

"He always felt a responsibility to help people," said Jill Stuckey, a longtime friend of Carter's in Plains. "And when he couldn't make change wherever he was, he decided he had to go higher." Carter's path, a mix of happenstance and calculation, pitted moral imperatives against political pragmatism; and it defied typical labels of American politics, especially

caricatures of one-term pres-

idents as failures.

"We shouldn't judge presidents by how popular they are in their day. That's a very narrow way of assessing them," Carter biographer Jonathan Alter told *The Asso*ciated Press. "We should judge them by how they changed the country and the world for the better. On that score, Jimmy Carter is not in the first rank of American presidents, but he stands up quite

## documents in 'major' cyber incident'

**AGENCIES** WASHINGTON, 31 DECEMBER

Chinese hackers remotely accessed several U.S. Treasury Department workstations and unclassified documents after compromising a thirdparty software service provider, the agency said

Monday. The department did not provide details on how many workstations had been accessed or what sort of documents the hackers may have obtained, but it said in a letter to lawmakers revealing the breach that "at this time there is no evidence indicating the threat actor has continued



ing wartime or similar emer-

'Chinese hackers accessed workstations,

access to Treasury information." The hack was being investigated as a "major cybersecurity incident," it added.

"Treasury takes very seriously all threats against our systems, and the data it holds," a department spokesperson said in a separate statement. "Over the last four years, Treasury has significantly bolstered its cyber defense, and we will continue to work with both private and public sector partners to protect our financial system from threat actors."

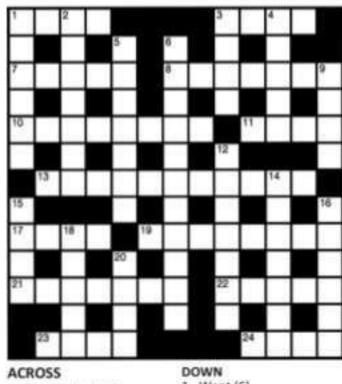
In Beijing, a Foreign Ministry spokesperson gave China's standard response to hacking allegations.

"We have repeatedly stated our position on such groundless accusations that lack evidence," Mao Ning said at a daily briefing. "China consistently opposes all forms of hacking, and we are even more opposed to the dissemination of false information against China for political

purposes."

### **LEISURE**

### 10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



1 Celestial body (4) 3 Upper-class person Move (5) 8 Sloping letters (7) 10 Stretch (8) 11 Make eyes at (4) 13 Tryst (11) 17 Too (4) 19 Exercise weight (8) 21 Evil (7) 22 Depart (5) 23 Retained (4) 24 Depend (4)

3 Nick,

**ACROSS** 12 Philosopher,

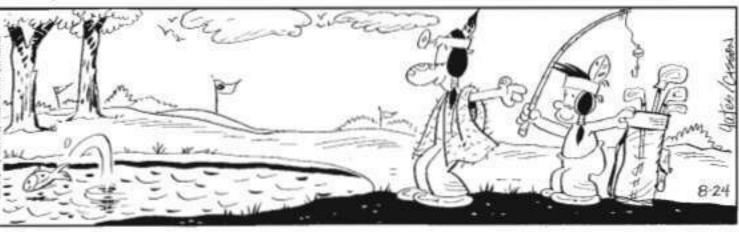
 Wept (6) 2 Difficult and tiring (7) 3 Snare (4) 4 Throw (5) 5 Flightless bird (7) 6 Make out (11) 9 Appear (4) 12 Bristly growth (7) 14 Intimidate (7) 15 Ready money (4) 16 Somnolent (6) 18 Sharp point (5) 20 Mislaid (4) SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD DOWN 14 Pottery, 15 Defect, 16 Unaccept-2 Earls.

Nethal 5 Horn (Uni-18 Botch, 19 Pact. 21 Spectre, 22 Tiny, 4 Cash discorn), penser. 23 Dray, 6 Observe. 10 Onset, 11 Cash-and-24 Hut. 8 Acta carry, By arrangement with The Independent Figures in parentheses denote the number of letters in the words required

### **BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker**















### NEED TO KNOW

AIIMS 26588500, 26588900 Moolchand Medcity (formerly Hospital) 42000000 & 24-hour Vidyasagar Institute for Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences 26924300, 26924304 Batra Hospital & Medical Research Centre 29051280,

29958747 Deen Dayal Upadhyay 25496320, 25494403 «Guru Tegh Bahadur

by JUDD

### 22586262, 22585007

General Inquiry 139 \*Toll Free Nos. 1800112511 SMS Inquiry Nos. 57886, 54959, 5676747

ROADWAYS INQUIRY \*ISBT (General Inquiry): 23868836, 23865181 Haryana Roadways 23861262 \*Himachal Roadways 23717473, 23325320

FOUR RACK TOTAL

Punjab Roadways 23867842, 23860626 Rajasthan Roadways 23864470 =U.P. Roadways 23868709

**FLIGHT INQUIRY** \*AIR INDIA Flight Inquiry and

43513186; Indigo Airlines Air-

Reservation 18001801407 \*INDIGO AIRLINES New Delhi City Office 43513185, Call Centre 09910383838, 18001803838, Reservation

Reservation 33773377 \* Air Canada Flight Inquiry 25656421/25656431 Reservation 41528181 Air France Flight Inquiry and Reservation 23466262 (City) 25652294 (Airport) \* Kuwait Airways Flight Inquiry and Reservation 23354373

port 011-25671580; Terminal I-

B 25671576, Palam Road

and Reservation 39841111





TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN XHAMME letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right, in femiliary for the interpretation BIC4 1 - 63 MO1 7 - 66 RUMBLY used as any letter have no pised value. All hidd's words are in the Official Sec. 5 . 67 A P. T. A L N. O.P. T. O.N. ADDL TOWN PAR SCORE140-150

### SUDOKU Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green 3 6 5 2 9 6 4 4 6 3 8 8 Difficulty Level \*\*\* Sudoku is a number-placing

puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that no row, no column and no 3x3 box contains the same number. The difficulty level previous increases through the week.

### **THUMBNAILS**

**NPCI removes UPI user** onboarding limit for WhatsApp Pay: The **National Payments Corpo**ration of India (NPCI) on Tuesday removed the unified payments interface (UPI) user onboarding limit for WhatsApp Pay with immediate effect. With this, WhatsApp Pay can now extend UPI services to its entire user base in India, the NPCI said in a statement. Previously, the NPCI had permitted WhatsApp Pay to expand its UPI user base in a phased manner, lifting the previous cap of 100 million users. With this notification, the NPCI is removing the limit restrictions on user onboarding on WhatsApp Pay. "WhatsApp Pay shall continue to comply with all existing UPI guidelines and circulars applicable to existing third-party app providers (TPAPs)," said the corporation. According to third-party data, the Meta-owned platform has over 500 million users in India. The NPCI move heralds a significant shift in regulatory policy, which had previously limited WhatsApp Payment's rollout.Additionally, the NPCI has deferred a proposed rule to cap any single app's **UPI** transaction share at 30 per cent until December 31, 2026

## Market witnesses mixed trendonfinaltradingday

About 2239 shares advanced, 1571 shares declined, 97 shares were unchanged



**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE** 

**NEW DELHI, 31DECEMBER:** 

enchmark indices showed a mixed trend on Tuesday, the final trading day of 2024. Gains in pharma, PSU banks, and oil and gas stocks provided some relief.

At close, Sensex was down 109.12 points or 0.14per cent at 78,139.01, and the Nifty was up 13.25 points

or 0.06per cent at 23,658.15. About 2239 shares advanced, 1571 shares declined, and 97 shares unchanged.

Mid and small-cap indices outperformed as the BSE Midcap index climbed 0.13per cent while the BSE Smallcap index rose 0.71per

On Nifty, the gainers were Bharat Electronics (2.90per cent), Oil & Natural Gas Corporation (2.84per cent), Kotak Mahindra Bank (2.61per cent), Trent (2.43per cent), Coal India (1.65per cent). While on the losing side were Adani Enterprises (2.46per cent), Tech Mahindra (1.99per cent), Tata Consultancy Services (1.54per

cent), Infosys (1.36per cent),

Shriram Finance (1.02per

Among the sectors, healthcare emerged as the top performer soaring 41 per cent while the pharma and real estate posted stellar gains of 39per cent and 33per cent.

Nifty Media struggled shedding nearly 25per cent while the Nifty Bank index lagged the benchmarks with a modest 5per cent.

Nifty IT and Nifty Auto indices powered ahead, both climbing over 20per cent.

Among the individual stocks, Shriram Properties shares saw a 4per cent surge following the company's

announcement of the strategic sale of a 3.9-acre land parcel in Chennai.

Shares of Tata Chemicals Ltd, Gujarat Heavy Chemicals gained as the government announced minimum import price for soda ash.

RVNL shares advanced nearly 8per cent in the morning session after it was declared the lowest bidder for two projects.

Zomato shares declined despite reports that Magicpin, the hyper-local ecommerce firm backed by the online food delivery giant.

Adani Wilmar shares fell nearly 7per cent, a day after the Adani Enterprises announced plan to exit the JV with Singapore's Wilmar International.

The India VIX, a gauge of market volatility, rose 3.5per cent to 14.47.

The strengthening dollar

continued to weigh on emerging markets like India, while investors held their bets amid feeble hopes of a deep US Fed rate cut next year. Market's focus is expected to shift back to domestic Q3 results for insights into potential growth and earnings recovery and to the Union budget.

# Oil and gas industry set for long-term benefits with digitalisation: Report



**AGENCIES NEW DELHI, 31 DECEMBER** 

Digitalisation initiatives could provide long-term benefits to the oil and gas industry globally, a report showed on Tuesday.

Certain technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, cloud computing, the Internet of Things (IoT), robotics, and virtual and augmented reality (VR and AR), are now part of

the oil and gas industry The GlobalData's report, titled 'Digitalisation in Oil and Gas,' highlights the role of major oil and gas companies, such as ADNOC, BP, Chevron, ExxonMobil, Shell, and TotalEnergies, in the development and adoption of digital tools to solve business problems.

"Field personnel are extensively using handheld devices to gather data, make notes, and communicate with their team. These changes are aimed at cutting down inefficiencies in workflows for improved produc-

gas analyst at GlobalData. Operational risks are also reduced due to a lesser need for human intervention in hazardous environments, which is a very important benefit of digitalisation.

tivity and lower costs," said

Ravindra Puranik, oil and

The adoption of digital technologies is also expected to deliver intangible value in the form of emission reductions.

A recent poll from GlobalData indicated that companies were deploying digitalization to lower their

operational emissions. With worries over climate change increasing every year, managing emissions has become

critical for the industry. Drones are being used to monitor methane emissions in the industry, and AI can be used to determine effective strategies to mitigate methane emissions

ations. "These efforts are in line with the ESG objectives set by international agreements such as the Paris Accord," said Puranik.

from daily oil and gas oper-

As digital technologies are not a core area of expertise for oil and gas companies, the challenge of having a workforce with essential skills remains a key con-

Some of these challenges can be overcome through collaboration with technology experts and regular training on cybersecurity awareness (among other measures).

"Industry participants are already doing this with oil majors, such as Exxon-Mobil and Chevron signing long-term partnerships with Microsoft. These would help companies navigate through the technology pitfalls and make further progress in digitalizing their entire operations," the report men-

### **Indian Stock Market During 2024** Scale Dec 31: 85,836.12 BSE 78,139.01 84,000 BSE for NSE 82,000 Sensex 80,000 78,000 Jan 1: 76,000 26,000 74,000 72,000 70,000 22,000 Dec 31: 23,644.80 20,000 **KBK Infographics** Source: Bombay Stock Exchange & National Stock Exchange

## 2024: Make In India 2.0 develops robust manufacturing sector

### **STATESMAN NEWS SER-VICE**

**NEW DELHI, 31 DECEMBER** 

In the year 2024, Make In India 2.0 developed a robust manufacturing sector across 27 categories with renewed vigour and energy.

As per the government data, with Rs 1.46 lakh crore investments by August 2024, the initiative has generated Rs 12.50 lakh crore in production, Rs 4 lakh crore in exports, and 9.5 lakh jobs.

Exports have also seen a substantial uptick, surpassing Rs 4 lakh crore, driven by key sectors such as electronics, pharmaceuticals, and food processing.

Notably, between April 2014 and March 2024, India attracted \$667.41 billion in FDI, representing nearly 67% of the total FDI received over the last 24 years.

In terms of mobile manufacturing, back in 2014-15, domestic mobile phone production stood at 5.8 crore units, which was increased to 33 crore units in 2023-24, with imports dropping significantly.

Exports reached 5 crore units, and FDI increased by 254 per cent.

In the first seven months of FY25, iPhone production in India reached an impressive \$10 billion, with \$7 billion in exports, a new record.

Over the past four years, the Apple ecosystem has also generated 1,75,000 new direct jobs, with over 72 per cent of these roles filled by women. India has achieved 60%

products under the PLI scheme. Through Make in India initiative, India has grown

its influence in the global

import substitution in telecom

pharma industry with nearly 50 per cent of the production is now directed towards exports, the government claims.

The automotive PLI scheme has also driven significant investments and boosted production of hightech automotive products. Over 115 companies applied, with 85 approved for incentives, expected to attract US\$ 8 billion in invest-

ments. Make in India initiative has also shown progress in the defence sector as the production has reached a record high of Rs 1.27 lakh crore in 2023-24, with exports to over 90 countries.

Annual defence production has also crossed 1.27 lakh crore this year, and government aspires to achieve 3 lakh crore in defence production by 2029. Defence exports have also surged from 686 crore in FY 2013-14 to 21,083 crore in FY 2023-24. In the Railways sector,

under the Make in India initiative, as of December 2, 2024, 136 Vande Bharat trains with Chair Car Coaches are already operating across the Indian Railways network. Further, Kavach system, designed to enhance train safety, has been deployed on 1,548 Route Kilometers (RKm) on South Central Railway and North Central Railway.

# POWERGRID signs green loan agreement with SMBC

**GURUGRAM, 31 DECEMBER** 

India Limited (POWERbetween POWERGRID and respectively.

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE** SMBC to develop critical infrastructure for renewable energy evacuation and inte-Power Grid Corporation of gration into the national

grid. GRID), a 'Maharatna' Public This loan agreement was Sector Enterprise under signed in the presence of Ministry of Power, Govern- Sh. G. Ravisankar, Director ment of India, has signed (Finance), POWERGRID, a landmark green loan agree- Sh. L. K. Khajkumar, ED ment with Sumitomo Mitsui (Corporate Planning), POW-Banking Corporation ERGRID and other senior (SMBC) on 31st December officials of SMBC and POW-2024 at GIFT City, Gandhi- ERGRID. Sh. Ashwani Kumar nagar, Gujarat, underscoring Gupta, ED(Finance), POWits pivotal role in India's ERGRID and Sh. Sriram renewable energy transfor- Kumondur, Managing mation. This facility denom- Director & Head, India Offinated in JPY for a US Dollar shore Banking, SMBC & Sh. equivalent of 200 million Manoj Kaushik, Branch with a greenshoe option of Head, SMBC, Gift City signed US\$150 million highlights this agreement on behalf the strategic collaboration of POWERGRID and SMBC

# Output of eight key infrastructure sectors slows down to 4.3 pc in Nov

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, 31DECEMBER** 

The output of eight key infrastructure sectors slowed down to 4.3 per cent in November 2024 against 7.9 per cent growth registered a year ago, data released by the government said on Tuesday. On a monthly basis, the production growth of these sectors was higher than the 3.7 per cent expansion recorded in October 2024.

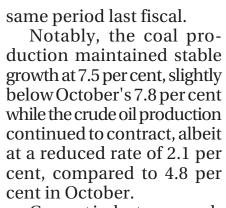
Electricity growth picked up to 3.8 per cent from 2 per cent in the previous month, while fertiliser growth was 2 per cent from 0.4 per cent.

Natural gas production recorded a decline of 1.9 per cent versus 1.2 per cent pre-



viously. Refinery products growth moderated to 2.9 per cent from 5.2 per cent in October, while steel production decelerated to 4.8 per cent from 5.2 per cent.

The growth of core sectors crude oil, natural gas, cement and was 4.2 per cent during April-November this fiscal. It was 8.7 per cent in the



Cement industry expanded at the fastest pace of 13 per cent, rising from 3.1 per cent growth in the previous month, while coal sector held steady with 7.5 per cent growth down from 7.8 per cent in the previous month.

The eight core sectors contribute 40.27 per cent to the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), which measures overall industrial growth.

### India's fiscal deficit for Apr-Nov recorded at ₹8.47 trillion

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI. 31 DECEMBER** 

India's fiscal deficit for April-November was Rs 8.47 trillion, or 52.5 per cent of the estimate for the financial year, data from the government said

In this period, the net tax receipts were at Rs 14.43 trillion, or 56 per cent of the annual target, compared with Rs 14.36 trillion for the same period last year.

Total government expenditure for the eight months annual goal. The government spent Rs 26.52 trillion in the same period last year.

Till November, the government's capital expendi-



ture, or spending on building physical infrastructure, was was Rs 27.41 trillion, or Rs 5.13 lakh crore, or 46.2 It comprised tax revenue about 57 per cent of the per cent of the annual target, (net to Centre) of about Rs as against Rs 5.86 lakh crore for the same period a year earlier.

ministry in a document said 0.78 lakh crore.

that the government will continue its focus on improving quality spending, strengthening the social security net and bringing down the fiscal deficit to 4.5 per cent of the GDP in FY26. As against total expen-

diture of Rs 48.21 lakh crore, the expenditure in first half of FY25 was Rs 21.11 lakh crore or about 43.8 per cent of BE. Total non-debt receipt

of the Centre was estimated at about Rs 32.07 lakh crore. 25.83 lakh crore, non-tax revenue of about Rs 5.46 lakh crore, and miscella-Recently, the finance neous capital receipts of Rs

### 'Kolkata will remain most affordable residential market in India, premium & mid range will also see upward growth in 2025'

**RITWIK MUKHERJEE KOLKATA, 31 DECEMBER** 

With yet another year drawing to an end and a whole new year setting in, various stakeholders of the country's real estate sector are looking at how the year gone by played out for them and more importantly how does the new year look to be, what are the prom-

Speaking to The Statesman, Sushil Mohta, Chairman, Merlin Group & President, CREDAI, West Bengal, shares his perspectives on these. Excerpts:

Q: How was 2024 for Bengal, in general, and the Kolkata market, in particular, as far as real estate sector is concerned --both residential and commercial? Mohta: The year 2024 has

been a pretty good year for the overall economy and Real Estate sector riding high on the growing demand, economic growth overall prosperity and growing disposable income in the hands of middle

The year has witnessed record registration in residential projects till the stamp

duty waiver was there. Rera has been a huge differentiator, this has consolidated the market, buyers are more confident in investing as they see their protection!

The overall residential market has maintained the upward trajectory of growth since 2021 post Covid and

RERA. As the Home loan rate was stable, further not increased, people are buying properties.

The residential market has witnessed several new project launches and unsold Inventory also has been reduced to a large extent. Kolkata, largely known as an affordable housing market, has witnessed a spurt in the sales of mid housing range and luxury range.

The segment ranging between Rs 60 and Rs 90 lakh has witnessed robust sales. What is very encouraging is that luxury segment in the range of Rs 1 crore to Rs 3 crore has seen a boom. Real estate players offer many luxury features like, luxury club houses with lot of facilities, Gardens, water bodies with



musical fountains, terraces for premium apartments. Though overall market in

year 2024 is pretty upbeat, the withdrawal of nearly three year long stamp duty rebate residential real estate in the in July has witnessed some

decline in home registration. In the year 2024, commercial real estate market also has witnessed a boom

in Kolkata after a long gap. office space leasing in Kolkata stood at 1.2 mn. sq. ft. in Jan-Sep '24 compared to 1.0 mn. sq. ft. in the same period last

One could see good demand for retail and warehousing also.

Q: What is your take for

Mohta: Overall we are quite upbeat about the future of residential market in Kolkata in the year 2025 as well.

In 2024, more homes are sold in Kolkata than Chennai. In Jan--Sept, a study by international real estate consultant JLL reported sales of over 13,500 homes in Kolkata valued at Rs 8,869 crore. By the end of this year, the

number of homes sold in Kolkata could exceed 17,000 units and over value close to Rs 12,000 crore. This trend will continue in the year 2025 as well and market will mature. Kolkata is expected to remain the most affordable major residential market in India, However the premium range and mid range will see the upward growth as well.

Q: Lot of inventories are coming in Kolkata market, what about the demand?

Mohta: Kolkata will see a growth in sales in the year 2025, so inventories will be absorbed proportionately. Sushil Mohta, Chairman, Merlin Group & President, CREDAI WEST BENGAL



# Premier League: Newcastle beat Man Utd, Ipswich stun Chelsea

The Magpies continue winless misery for former European champions, minnows Ipswich spring a surpise against London giants

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE** 

LONDON, 31 DECEMBER

'ewcastle United recorded their fourth straight Premier League win after a 2-0 victory over struggling Manchester United at Old Trafford.

Alexander Isak scored for the sixth straight Premier League game to gift Newcastle fans a morale boosting victory going into the new year.

This was Newcastle's fourth successive victory while United are beaten for the third straight match.

Newcastle's commanding display marked the first time since February 1979 that Man United has lost three home league games in a row. It was also the first time since 1962 that United has lost five league matches in the same calendar month.

The result keeps the Magpies in fifth place in the Premier League table heading into January - just three points shy of a top four spot with half the campaign still to play.

Newcastle made a confident start and were 1-0 up inside just four minutes as superb build-up in the middle of the park led to Hall's inviting cross being nodded home by

The Sweden striker started the misery for the fans with



his eighth goal in six matches. Isak put Newcastle ahead with a header after four minutes and Joelinton doubled their minutes later when he rose above Lisandro Martinez to head in a second.

Newcastle doubled their

lead in similar fashion soon after, with Joelinton rising above Lisandro Martinez to bundle past Andre Onana.

Isak had another effort disallowed after half an hour when only the offside flag prevented him from adding a third and Sandro Tonali hit the woodwork seconds later as Newcastle threatened to run riot.

Amorim withdrew Joshua Zirkzee for Kobbie Mainoo before halftime but United looked toothless—and clue-

less — in what was a dismal display.

Rasmus Hoilund shot marginally wide as the hosts sought a response at the other end, with Casemiro failing to hit the target from close range after a poor giveaway

# ban for 'misconduct'



Wolves star handed 2-game

**AGENCIES** LONDON, 31 DECEMBER

Wolverhampton Wanderers forward Matheus Cunha has been handed a two-game ban by the Football Association (FA) after he was charged with 'misconduct' for acting in an 'improper manner' following their 1-2 defeat against Ipswich Town at the Molineux Stadium on 14 December.

The incident occurred after the final whistle when Jack Taylor scored an injurytime winner for the visitors. Cunha elbowed a member of the Ipswich staff before snatching his glasses off his face. The Brazilian forward has also been fined 80,000

Pounds for the incident. "Matheus Cunha has been suspended for two games and fined £80,000 following the Premier League fixture between Wolverhampton Wanderers and Ipswich Town on Saturday 14 December 2024.

"The forward was charged with misconduct and it was alleged that he acted in an improper manner after the final whistle. He admitted the charge and the sanctions were subsequently imposed by an independent Regulatory Commission. Full written reasons for this case will be published in due course,"

read the statement by FA. The defeat against Ipswich Town was the last straw for the Wolves board as head coach Gary O'Neil and his backroom staff were removed from their position after the game. The suspension means the Brazilian will be absent from Vitor Pereira's squad for the Premier League match against Nottingham Forest and the FA Cup third-round tie away to Bristol City. He will be available to return for his team's league match against Newcastle United

on 15 January.

## United Cup: Fritz, Gauff seal quarter-final berth for USA

PERTH. 31 DECEMBER

Taylor Fritz and Coco Gauff guided USA to the United Cup quarterfinals with a 3-0 win against Croatia on Tues-

Fritz eased to a 6-3, 6-2 win over Borna Coric, ensuring USA top Group A and qualify for the quarterfinals, where they will face China on New Year day. Gauff then notched a dominant win over Donna Vekic to wrap up the tie before teaming up with Fritz to secure their second mixed doubles triumph of the week.

"I feel like I'm a completely different player from when we have played in the past. It's great to get that win, especially after the other day (where I was) a set and break up (against Auger-Aliassime)," said Fritz of his singles win.

Gauffwas a comprehensive 6-4, 6-2 winner over Vekic to clinch the Americans' second victory in as many roundrobin ties at the season-opening United Cup. "I'm really happy with how I played today. She's a great player, and the Olympics loss hurt, so I definitely was thinking about it today as motivation to do better. The game I got broken, she played a great game. I have no regrets off that game... but I'm really happy with how I served today and how I competed throughout the whole match,"



Gauff said post-match. Gauff and Fritz made it a clean sweep for the Americans by defeating Petra Marcinko and Ivan Dodig 6-2, 6-3 in mixed doubles. The Americans saved each of the three break points they faced, according to ATP Stats, and broke their opponents serve on four occasions. Meanwhile, Flavio Cobolli bounced back from

the verge of defeat on saving a match point and produced a memorable comeback as Italy sweeps France to book a place in the quarterfinals

of the United Cup. The Italian defeated Frenchman Ugo Humbert 3-6, 7-6(8), 6-2. Ugo Humbert, won his first 17 service points in the second set and served for the match at 6-3, 5-415/0.

But the Frenchman was unable to convert match point at 8/7 in the ensuing tiebreak and that proved costly. Italy went on to sweep the tie 3-0 after wins from Jasmine Paolini and mixed doubles pair Sara Errani and Andrea Vavassori. The country has now won Group D and will move into the knockout stages of the mixed-teams event.

France needed to defeat Italy

3-0 to win the group. Mixed doubles pair of Errani and Vavassori defeated Edouard Roger-Vasselin and Elixane Lechemia 6-3, 7-6.

With Italy already safely through to the quarterfinals, world No.4 Paolini had no pressure on her shoulders as she followed in women's sin-

# Djokovic beats Hijikata, storms into second round in Brisbane

**AGENCIES** 

from Fabian Schar.

hour mark.

Amorim's side continued

to threaten after the break and went close to pulling a

goal back when Harry Maguire

struck a post just before the

headed wide from a corner as the breakthrough ultimately

eluded the Red Devils, with

Newcastle comfortably seeing

out only a second Premier

League win at Old Trafford,

really, really good. His all

round game is really strong.

He can do a bit of everything.

Most importantly, he needs

to be in the right place at the

right time to score goals. Early

in the match it was a great

cross from Lewis Hall and

Alex was there with the head-

er," said Newcastle manager

im said, "It is really hard. It is

one of the worst moments

in the history of our club,

and we have to accept that.

Another loss in front of our

stunned Chelsea with a hard-

fought 2-0 win as Liam Delap

stole the show in his side's

first home win of the Premier

League season. A penalty

from Liam Delap and an

Omari Hutchinson strike were

enough to seal a hard-fought

victory for Ipswich.

Elsewhere, Ipswich Town

United boss Ruben Amor-

Eddie Howe.

own supporters."

"Alexander Isak has been

Premier League reports.

Substitute Leny Yoro also

**BRISBANE, 31 DECEMBER** 

Novak Djokovic marked his return to singles action with a dominant win at the Brisbane International, dispatching Australian wildcard Rinky Hijikata 6-3, 6-3 at Pat Rafter Arena.

PlayinghisfirstATPsingles match since October, the Serbian showcased his trademark precision and resilience kicking off his 2025 singles season in impressive fashion.

A day after partnering with Nick Kyrgios for a doubles win, Djokovic delivered a clinical performance in his singles opener. Over the course of 75 minutes, he overwhelmed Hijikata with his impeccable baseline play and unerring serve, winning 81% of points behind his first serve. The 37year-old did not face a single break point, underscoring his dominance.

"I always expect myself to do well on the court. Obviously, a win is a win," Djokovic said during his on-court interview. "To start off the new season with a win is very important. I think Hijikata deserves a great round of applause for his performance tonight, he was really good. He made me work, definitely, for the win tonight."

Hijikata, playing in front of a supportive home crowd,



showed flashes of promise but struggled to penetrate Djokovic's near-flawless defense. The Serbian broke the Australian's serve twice in each set, staying comfortably in control throughout.

The victory allowed Djokovic to wrap up his evening early, leaving time for New Year's Eve celebrations with his family. Speaking after the match, Djokovic shared his plans: "We will definitely celebrate the New Year, we have some plans. My family is here. My kids are excited to go past their bedtime. We are going to watch, I guess, one of many fireworks displays tonight here in Brisbane.'

Addressing the Brisbane crowd, Djokovic added a heartfelt message:

"Happy New Year in advance to everyone. It's a

played a match at the United Cup in Perth just before midnight, and again here in Brisbane, so it's kind of a tradition now happening each year. Thanks for choosing to come and spend New Year's Eve on the court here with us; we appreciate it."

Djokovic's next challenge in Brisbane is a familiar foe -Gael Monfils, against whom he holds a commanding 19-0 head-to-head record. A win against the Frenchman would not only advance Djokovic further in the tournament but also edge him closer to a historic milestone. The Serbian is aiming to become just the third player in history to win 100ATP tour-level titles, joining the elite company of Jimmy Connors (109) and Roger Fed-

## Attacking flair, defensive shifts define ISL 2024-25 first half

**AGENCIES** 

MUMBAI, 31 DECEMBER

As the Indian Super League (ISL) 2024-25 season capped offits 14th match week, notable changes in attacking, defensive and overall tactical trends have emerged as compared to the previous season. The numbers not only paint a vivid picture of an action-packed campaign but also lay the foundation for storylines that deserve further exploration.

An increase in the number of goals scored can be seen at the conclusion of matchweek 14, as a total of 252 goals had been netted, a 23.53 per cent rise from the 204 goals seen at the same point last season. This surge has been driven by a collective shift toward more attacking football, with as many as four teams, i.e. NorthEast United FC (29), Bengaluru FC (27), Mohun Bagan Super Giant (26), Odisha FC (25) having found the back of the net 25 times or more already.



The most significant change is reflected in the average goals per match, which has increased from 2.55 in 2023-24 to 3 this season, further delivering entertaining encounters for fans.

The improvement in attacking efficiency is particularly evident when looking at individual players. Alaaeddine Ajaraie of NorthEast United

FChas emerged as the standout striker, leading the scoring charts with 14 goals and four assists in 13 games, already surpassing last season's top scorer, Roy Krishna, who netted

11 goals in 15 matches at this stage. In contrast, Krishna has netted thrice this season, with his striking partner Diego Mauricio embracing a more advanced role, marking 10

goal contributions already, by scoring or assisting once in every 77.6 minutes on average. The league's attacking boom has marginally impacted defensive records, with clean sheets dropping slightly from 44 in 2023-24 to 43 in 2024-25. Despite this, Mohun Bagan Super Giant (6), Bengaluru FC (5), and Mumbai City FC (5) have managed to maintain defensive discipline, each registering five or more clean sheets.

Interestingly, the trend in clean sheets arguably highlights the improved attacking prowess of teams. The increase in shot conversion rates from 10.59 per cent at the end of MW14 last year to 10.91 per cent at that stage this season further emphasises this point. Players like Alberto Rodriguez (44.44 per cent), Nathan Rodrigues (40 per cent), Ryan Williams (38.46 per cent), Sunil Chhetri (32.14 per cent), and Asmir Suljic (30 per cent) have set the standards for finishing efficiency in ISL 2024-25.

# Wayne Rooney sacked by struggling Plymouth

erer (103).

the future.

**AGENCIES** 

PLYMOUTH, 31 DECEMBER

**England and Manchester** United legend Wayne Rooney has been sacked by Championship club Plymouth Argyle after the side sits at

24th place in the league table. Alongside Rooney, Assistant Head Coach Mike Phelan and first team coach Simon Ireland will also be departing the club. Rooney will be replaced by first team coach Kevin Nancekivell and club captain Joe Edwards will be in charge of the team for the game against Bristol City on Wednesday.

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Board of Plymouth Argyle Football Club, in particular Simon Hallett and Neil Dewsnip who I shared great relationships with. Thanks also to all the staff who made me feel welcome and who make the club such a special place,

the players and fans for their efforts and support during my time as Head Coach and I wish them all the best for

"To the Green Army thanks for making the games at Home Park so special, they are memories that we will share forever. "I would also like to give a special mention to my coaching staff Kevin Nancekivell, Simon Ireland, Darryl Flahavan and Mike Phelan for their knowledge, dedication, help and support. Plymouth Argyle will always hold a special place in my heart, and I will continue to look out for and take interest

statement by Rooney. Wayne Rooney has so far had a disappointing run as manager. His career began as a caretaker manager for Championship side Derby County, following which he was made the permanent head coach.

in their results," read the



**THUMBNAILS** Navjot Singh Sidhu condemns Travis Head's celebration as insult to India, calls for punishment: Former Indian cricketer Navjot Singh Sidhu has strongly criticized Australian cricketer Travis Head for his controversial celebration after dismissing Rishabh Pant during the Boxing Day Test. Sidhu labelled the celebration as an insult to 1.5 billion Indians and called for stringent punishment to prevent such actions in the future. The incident occurred during the final session of Day 5 at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. Rishabh Pant, who had been playing a brisk innings of 30, was dismissed by Head. Following the dismissal, Head celebrated by pointing one finger into a circularly shaped hand, a gesture that has sparked widespread debate. Reacting to the incident, Sidhu took to his X handle to express his outrage. He tweeted, "Travis head's obnoxious behaviour during the course of the Melbourne test doesn't auger well for the gentleman's game..... sets the worst possible example when there are kids, women, young & old watching the game...... this caustic conduct did not insult an individual but a nation of 1.5 billion Indians..... stringent punishment that would serve a deterrent for the

future generations needs

to be slapped on him so

that no one dares follow

suit !!!"

# All not lost, calculated risks may see India retain BGT

Despite being outplayed by Australia in three consecutive Tests, hope is till alive for the men in blue

**TRIDIB BAPARNASH NEW DELHI, 31 DECEMBER** 

s the dust settles on the 184-run loss in Melbourne, it is time the Indian team puts the setback behind and look forward to bounce back in the fifth and final Test in Sydney, starting January 3. The turnaround time for the next Test is short, and thus they have a couple of days to regroup and revisit their strategies before the action begins at the SCG.

A 2-2 scoreline would not only be enough for the visitors to retain the Border-Gavaskar Trophy they have held in their hands for the past decade, butmoreimportantlyitcould keep them in the race to the ICCWorldTestChampionship final in June, 2025.

But Lord's is a distant dream for now, the immediate focus is on winning the Sydney Test.

In the past, India have managed to come back strongly when they have been pushed against the wall, and the team needs the same kind of gas to push the Aussies at the Sydney Cricket Ground, where they are yet to win a Test in 46 years. The only time an Indian teamwon a Test in 13 appearances at the venue was way back in 1978. However, India drew their last three tests at the venue in 2015, 2019 and



2021.

With the series already in Australia's pocket for now, India can't afford a draw, and thus will need clarity of thought, calculated risks, and more importantly sensible selection to get home.

First and foremost, the batting fragility in the top order, especially of the two seniormost batters—Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli must be addressed. Relying on their past laurels, and allowing them to find form with a series on the line, would be a foolish idea. Instead, India must bring in their highest scorer of the currentWTCcycle—Shubman doing a fair bit, and survived Gill, who was dropped from the Boxing Day Test, after a rejig in the batting order that disrupted the successful opening partnership between KL Rahul and Yashasvi Jaiswal. The rejig was triggered by Rohit's return to the top of the order.

But the ploy backfired as Rohit's prolonged lean patch continued when he misjudged the line of a widish short ball and fell, miscuing the pull in the first innings in Melbourne. Later in India's chase of 340, Rohit did show the intent against a new ball that was 39 balls — the second time in 15 innings that he'd batted this long, before losing his patience for another forceful mis-hit at gully.

With reports floating of Rohit making up his mind to hang his boots after the BGT, he would be keen to make his presence felt at the SCG, and leave on a high, but is it worth the risk with a series at stake? The answer lies with the team management.

India will also need to figure out the right balance in playing all-rounders. The idea behind accommodating the additional

all-rounder in Washington Sundar worked for India at the MCG only in terms of his batting as he came up with a half century in the first innings. But if they play all-rounders to give the bowling attack a cushion then they need to revisit their plans, as Sundar

and Nitish Kumar Reddy

bowled only 27 overs between

them in the entire Test match. While Nitish has been in stellar form with the willow, and also contributed with occasional wickets, the axe could fall on Sundar for no fault of his, if India are to accommodate Gill as chances of dropping an off-colour Rohit or Virat look highly unlikely.

India will also expect Rishabh Pant to play to the situation rather than taking undue risks with his shotmaking. The same was also pointed out by Rohit on Monday, after the southpaw's dismissal for 30 off 104 balls while attempting to pull Travis Head that broke a resolute partnership with Yashasvi Jaiswal, and ultimately opened the floodgates for the Aussies at the MCG. It remains the team management's call whether India continue with the same combination or ring in a few changes in Sydney, the tourists will have their task cut out in what could be their most challenging New Year's Test for ages!

# Ozoptimisticabout Starc's availability for Sydney Test



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI. 31 DECEMBER** 

Australia head coach Andrew McDonald remained optimistic about left-arm quick Mitchell Starc's availability for the crucial fifth and final Test in Sydney, starting 3 January. Starc has been battling through sore ribs from day three of the Boxing Day Test but still managed to bowl effectively, including claiming the prized wicket of Virat Kohli on the final

"Any time you get through the game, it's always a good indicator that you've a chance at the next game," McDonald told reporters after the hosts picked up a memorable victory at the MCG to take a 2-1 lead in the series.

"It didn't stop him (Starc). Clearly there was a little bit of discomfort early on in spells, but once he got warm it seemed as though he was pretty free. We'll see how everyone recovers. Bowling last, it was a pretty attritional game, something that we're not used to in the last few years.

"Clearly Starcy's carrying something of some description. We'll assess that. But other than that, it looks as though we got through pretty unscathed, but [with a] short turnaround recovery is important, and we'll assess what the team looks like in Sydney based upon the surface, as we always do," he added.

The hosts will head to the SCG with a 2-1 lead in the series and need a draw or a win to regain the Border-Gavaskar trophy for the first time since 2014-15. However, if India win the New Year's Test, they will retain the trophy, winning the series for a record-extending fifth-straight time.

Australia desperately hope for Starc to continue to play the decider at his home ground, but should the leftarmer be unavailable, McDonald expressed confidence in Jhye Richardson or Sean Abbott to get the job done.

"Very confident. Richard-

son's here for a reason. So if we weren't confident, he wouldn't be here. He's had a heavy week with us in the nets. All indications are he'd be capable of bowling 40plus overs if he was called upon.

'Sean Abbott's there as well. We feel like, [the] SCG is his home ground, so he will be serviceable if called upon as well. It'll be about assessing our frontline quicks and then making decisions from there," he said.

Starc's fitness issues, compounded by his heavy workload alongside skipper Pat Cummins, have also drawn attention to the limited role of Mitch Marsh as a fifth bowler. Across four Tests, Australia's fifth bowling option Marsh has bowled only 33 overs, a statistic that underscores his underutilization.

Marsh's contributions with the bat have been similarly underwhelming, with just 73 runs at an average of 10.42 across four Tests (6, 47, 9, 5, 2, 4, 0). These lackluster returns have sparked criticism and calls for his exclusion.

"He's in a good [head] space. Would you like better performances? There's no doubt about that. Over four Test matches, he hasn't been able to deliver at the level he would like and we would

"He's up and about though. We just won a Test match. No, there's no concern. And I think people have probably been reading too much into that.

"We haven't required him with the ball as often as we would have thought. He bowled again today. There are no injury concerns there.

McDonald insisted that Marsh bowling just 33 overs is simply because the team didn't require him to roll his

"I think to sort of head that down that angle is a little bit unfair. We just haven't required him at certain times for whatever reason, so that's more a tactical implementation, as opposed to a body," he said.

### $Bumrah\, captain, Jais wal other\, Indian\, in\, Cricket\, Australia's\, Test\, Team\, of\, 2024$



**NEW DELHI, 31 DECEMBER** 

India's pace maestro Jasprit Bumrah has been in sublime during the ongoing 2024-25 edition of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy in Australia. The star pacer has been the most successful bowler during the series and his wizadry with the cricket ball seems to have etched a deep impression in the minds of his Australian rivals.

Cricket Australia has named India's premier pacer Jasprit Bumrah as captain of the Men's Test Team of the Year 2024. Opener Yashasvi Jaiswal is the other Indian named in the diverse playing XI featuring players from six countries.

Wicketkeeper-batter Alex Carey and pacer Josh Hazlewood are the two players from the Australian team to feature in the multinational

England's prolific batter Joe Root, Ben Duckett and Harry Brook along with New Zealand's Rachin Ravindra and Matt Henry are included in the side. Keshav Maharaj

from South Africa and Sri Lanka's Kamindu Mendis are sole representations from their countries.

India's 22-year-old batting prodigy Jaiswal showcased veteran-like composure throughout 2024. His backto-back double centuries in February secured a home Test series win against England, while his brilliant 161 in Perth proved decisive. Jaiswal set records for most runs by an Indian opener in a calendar year and most sixes (36) globally in a year.

England's Duckett impressed with his aggressive approach, scoring hundreds in Rajkot (153) and Multan (114) despite defeats. His strike rate of 87.04 underlined his value in England's attacking strategy.

Root added six centuries in 2024, including twin hundreds against Sri Lanka at Lord's and an unbeaten 262 in Multan, helping England secure a remarkable win over Pakistan.

His consistency and allround contributions, including 11 wickets, highlighted another stellar year.

New Zealand's Ravindra edged Kane Williamson for his heroics in a historic series win in India, including a match-winning 134 in the first Test. He also scored a double-century against South Africa at home.

Brook shone with seriesdefining hundreds against New Zealand and a stunning 317 in Multan, showcasing his match-winning brilliance under pressure. Sri Lanka's Mendis, who began the year as a fringe

player, ended with 1,000 runs

in 13 innings, matching Brad-

man's record. His four centuries underlined a breakout Australia's Carey was exceptional behind the stumps with 46 dismissals, while his

unbeaten 98 in Christchurch was one of the year's best fourth-innings knocks. Henry emerged as New Zealand's key bowler, high-

lighted by his 5-15 against

Bumrah's 2024 was historic, with 71 wickets in 13 matches at 14.92, making him a standout bowler in the

# Deepti breaks into top 5 of ICC Women's ODI rankings

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE** during the series. **NEW DELHI, 31 DECEMBER** 

India off-spinner Deepti Sharma rose a spot to break into the top5inthelatestICCWomen's ODI rankings for bowlers, following her match-winning performances in the recently-concluded home series against the West Indies.

Deepti, now ranked fifth, has 665 rating points and is narrowlybehindSouthAfrica's Marizanne Kapp, who holds the fourth spot with 677 points. The 27-year-old made headlines by taking eight wickets in two matches, including stunning figures of 6/31 in the final game, as India completed a clean sweep in the three-match series held in Vadodara.

Among batters, Jemimah Rodrigues, with 537 rating points, is closing in on a top-20 position. She has jumped four spots to 22nd, courtesy of her scores of 29 and 52

The big-hitting Richa Ghosh has also made notable progress, moving up seven places to 41st with 448 rating points. Her scores of 13 not out and 23 not out proved crucial.

Chinelle Henry's half-century in the third ODI has propelled her 21 spots up the rankings to 65th, with 349 points.

However, India's charismatic opener Smriti Mandhana, despite scoring two half-centuries in the series, has dropped one place to third with 720 rating points. She now trails South Africa's Laura Wolvaardt (773) and Sri Lanka's Chamari Athapaththu (733). India skipper Harmanpreet Kaur has also slipped three places to 13th.

Meanwhile, West Indies' Hayley Matthews, who scored her seventh ODI century in Vadodara, has climbed six places to seventh in the ICC women's batting rankings.

## How Manu Bhaker got over Tokyo heartbreak to create history at Paris 2024

**AGENCIES** 

**NEW DELHI, 31 DECEMBER** 

The year 2024 turned out to be a game-changing period for shooter Manu Bhaker, who created history at the Paris Olympics 2024 by winning two medals in shooting events, and becoming the first Indian athlete in the post-independence era to achieve this feat after Norman Pritchard in 1900.

Bhaker opened India's medal tally at the Paris Olympics by securing third place in the women's individual 10m air pistol event, becoming the first Indian woman shooter to win an Olympic medal, adding another milestone to her already illustrious career.

Following this, Bhaker, alongside Sarabjot Singh, clinched her second bronze in the 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team event. The duo displayed exceptional consistency, defeating South Korea's



Lee Wonho and Oh Ye Jin with a score of 16-10 in the bronze medal play-off match.

Their victory marked India's first-ever shooting team medal at the Olympics.

Despite narrowly missing out on a historic treble by finishing fourth in the

Bhaker's achievements in Paris cement her status as the most successful Indian woman shooter in history. Her career is already decorated with gold medals from the World Championships, Asian Games, Commonwealth Games, and Youth Olympic Games.

This success comes after the heartbreak of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, where a pistol malfunction denied Bhaker a shot at a medal in the same event. Her resilience and determination have now propelled her to the pinnacle of Indian shooting sports.

Born on February 18, 2002, in Jhajjar, Haryana, Bhaker initially pursued a variety of sports, including tennis, skating, and boxing. She also excelled in 'thang ta', a form of martial arts, winning medals at the national level before dedicating herself to shoot-

India's overall performance

women's 25m pistol event, at the Paris 2024 Olympics was commendable, securing a total of six medals--one silver and five bronze. Swapnil Kusale contributed to the tally with a bronze medal in the men's 50m rifle 3 positions event. The Indian men's hockey team added to the medal count by winning back-to-back bronze medals for the first time in 52 years,

defeating Spain 2-1. In track and field, javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra narrowly missed defending his Tokyo gold medal, but he brought home a silver with a throw of 89.45m. Wrestler Aman Sehrawat, making his Olympic debut, clinched a bronze medal with a 13-5 victory over Puerto Rico's Darian Cruz.

India's impressive haul at the Paris 2024 Olympics underscores the country's growing prowess in a diverse range of sports, setting a promising precedent for future competitions.

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